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VOLUME ONE, ISSUE NO TEN

AUGUST 2003

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## MAYOR STREET & SAM KATZ BATTLE OVER LOVE PARK'S FUTURE; DO SKATEBOARDERS LURE HARD CASH OR MAR SOFT STONES? POLLS WANT KIDS TO THINK OUTSIDE BOX, SKATE INSIDE SQUARE

### GOV. DAVIS MAY BE 1<sup>ST</sup> IN BLOODY LINE OF DEPOSED CALI KINGS

Fashionable Recall Election Fad  
Finishes Eighty-Year Migration  
From N. Dakota to Left Coast

### WILL KINDERGARTEN COP ROCK THE ROYAL RUMBLE?

LOS ANGELES—California's gone completely nuts but first things first: let us consider the story of three-time North Dakota governor Lynn J. Frazier. In October 1921, Frazier became the first and thus far the only U.S. governor to be recalled by voters. Frazier, a socialist, must have fretted each morning over the newspaper headlines, which all summer screamed "SACCO! VANZETTI!"—although, in the end, it wasn't the Red Scare that did him in so much as the red ink all over the state budget.

Two years after being evicted from office, Frazier was still popular and respected enough to be elected Senator. There was a little "R" next to his name on the ballot, but his road-to-Damascus conversion seems to have been somewhat less than complete. Frazier was a consistent proponent of an amendment that would have made the waging of war, any war, unconstitutional. He introduced the amendment during every year of his time in the Senate, where it failed fourteen times.

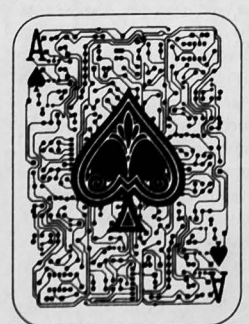
On October 7, 2003, almost eighty-two years to the day after North Dakota sent Frazier packing, Californians will head to the polls to determine whether or not Democratic Governor Gray Davis constitutes a choking hazard to the state. The ostensible reason for this recall ballot is, as with Frazier, Davis's inability to manage the budget crisis (at \$38 billion dollars, California's deficit is larger than all the other states' combined), but it may also have something to do with Davis being too damn unlikeable as a person. He has the face of a very unassuming greyhound, does best with people who have already paid \$1,000 a plate, and endeavors to be nothing more than the lesser of all evils. Davis possesses the curious combination of being completely introverted, while at the same time appearing to lack any sort of inner life.

As of this writing, the only official candidate to oppose Davis is

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### THE SHARK

HOW PLAYING CARDS  
PAYS MY BILLS



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### Pine Street Zeus Lustrs After Mortals

Emblazoned on the sidewalk of S. 13th Street between Pine and Lombard is the slogan "A Woman was Harassed Here!" stenciled in black spraypaint. One wonders what offense made this block so special, why the entire expanse of the city's concrete is not similarly defaced, Warhol-style, with rows upon rows of spray-painted rage lined up like soup cans. Surely this is not the only block in Philadelphia where the harassment of women has occurred. Perhaps the political artist behind the stencil, bored by garden-variety harassment, strove to map out the sites of the most colorful and exotic. We now offer a report which may explain the stencil's origins.

From the uppermost floors of Casa Ferri, an apartment building for the elderly around the corner, one can sometimes hear an unearthly hooting sound floating down to the sidewalk from one of the balconies facing 13th Street. It would seem that this bizarre sound, reminiscent of both the taunting laugh of one Simpson's bully and the abrasive two-note call of a mockingbird, tends to be provoked by the sight of one or more shapely young ladies making their way towards South Street. The victims look about, baffled, until the source of the raunchy mating call is divined. Boyfriends, fathers, husbands, brothers, and the young ladies themselves shake their fists and bellow threats heavenwards to no avail. The ancient, lecherous catcaller is located too high above street level to heed the vented, impotent fury of his earthbound peepshow. We propose to buy him a set of binoculars, that he might read the placard spray-painted in his honor.

### the lunch report

At noontime, the arabic numeral "4" takes on a cosmic significance. Like 10,000 points to a Dow Jones trader or 800 m.p.h. to a land speed record racer, \$4.00 stands as a seemingly invincible challenge to the thrifty downtown luncher, a wall that one must break through, a limbo bar that one must slide underneath. Here are some of our better attempts:

**\$3.50:** Two slices of cheese pizza from Lazzaro's @ 1743 South. Filling.

**\$2.25:** Meatball sandwich from 3rd & Market cart. Meaty, saucy.

**\$2.00:** Vietnamese hoagie from Ding Ho Noodle Co. at 930 Arch. Fresh ingredients, vegetarian options, smallish portions, seating with no tipping.

**\$1.05:** Three pretzels from 8th & Market cart. Salty, curly, lukewarm.

**50¢:** Today's *Inquirer*. Good value. Ink may be carcinogenic. May not be edible.

**Free:** Fresh Fields. Samples are plentiful, as is bulk food runoff.

### START YOUR OWN RADIO STATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The number of channels available for low-power F.M. radio stations could triple if the Federal Communications Commission adopts recommendations from an independent study on radio interference. Low-power stations operate at under 100 watts and can be started for as little as \$500. National Public Radio has fought to keep the number of micro stations down, claiming low-power FM would cause interference with larger broadcasters on the rest of the spectrum. The new study, conducted by the MITRE Corporation, has proven that this is not the case.

The Prometheus Radio Project, a Philadelphia-based radio advocacy group, is urging NPR to change their position. Currently Philadelphia has at least one low-power FM radio station at WPEB 88.1 FM. The FCC is accepting public comment on the issue through Sept. 12.

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### THREE CITIES BUILD PUBLIC SKATEPARKS WITH PUBLIC FUNDS

Taxpayers Spent \$2.5 million for  
Free Public Park in Louisville;  
\$1 Million Spent in Denver

Taxpayers in Denver, Colo. spent more than \$1 million on their free public skatepark. Councilwoman Joyce Foster, who organized a group of young skateboarders to research, design, and oversee construction of the park told the *Denver Westword* that "I just got tired of hearing that the solution to the illegal skateboarding problem was to keep raising the fines. I got tired of the small-minded perception of these kids."

Louisville, Ky. taxpayers spent \$2.5 million on a public skatepark which the mayor has credited with bringing life back into to a deteriorating neighborhood. The park won praise from professional skater Tony Hawk. In Wilmington, Del., a non-profit has raised at least \$80,000 for a skatepark—including money from the Tony Hawk Foundation and the State of Delaware. City Councilman Kevin Kelley said the park should be complete by autumn 2004 at a cost of \$250,000, according to the *Wilmington News Journal*.

### LORD WHIMSY

THE CAVALIER MOUNTS  
HIS NEW VELOCPEDE



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### INDEPENDENCE MALL GETS SHARPER IMAGE

American Idol Sings Blessings  
To New Imperial Temple

CENTER CITY, Phila.—The dedication ceremony for the new \$137 million National Constitution Center on Independence Mall began at 9 a.m. on July 4 with Justin Guarini singing the national anthem in front of a big American flag. He'd had a rough week with the personal watercraft crash and all. "It's wild how it's just been so crazy," he said, in a live interview that may have been intended to warm up the crowd. Richard DeVos took the stage a few minutes later. DeVos, who co-founded Amway, donated \$10 million of his \$1.6 billion fortune to the center. Mr. DeVos is the sort of man who is not ashamed of his riches and is not embarrassed to tell you so. "I happen to believe that success is not sinful, and that poverty is not a virtue," he said, to 2,000 ticket holders.

They had the orchestra play "Fanfare for the Common Man." It was a hot July day, so they brought out pallets stacked with shrink-wrapped water bottles. The sounds of the protestors at Franklin Square made a soft white noise.

### The Last Morsels of Liberty

September 11th has been used to justify all kinds of scams, everything from higher insurance premiums to star-spangled paraphernalia to limitless military contracts for the vice president's former bosses. Thanks to the Eagles, the profiteers now know the limits of cashing in on tragedy. The American people's pursuit of happiness, embodied in the right of fans to pack and eat their own sandwiches in peace at a professional football game, is sacred. When the invisible hand of commerce meddles with this right, it gets bitten.

Instead of contenting themselves with a \$150 million public subsidy for their new quarters at Lincoln Financial Field, Eagles management tried to boost their windfall one \$6.50 hoagie at a time, by placing "food" on a list of items which posed too great a security risk to enter the new stadium. September 11th aside, this act violated the most basic axiom of political science: You can deprive people of their lives and you deprive people of their liberty

and get away with it almost every time, but if you mess with their sandwiches they will rise up and destroy you. An ad-hoc army of fans, along with the mayor and governor, soon descended on the hapless Eagles management, circulating petitions and speaking loudly on the radio. Eagles president Joe Banner quickly succumbed to the pressure and lifted the food ban, but still hasn't conceded that there was ever any profit motive.

Now food will be permitted in clear plastic containers at designated entrance gates that have been fortified with extra security. And while there are presently no water fountains on any of the main concourses, water will be available at four first aid stations, one for every 17,000 or so of the stadium's 69,030 seats. Banner said the Eagles are working to install fountains as soon as possible. Until then, concession stands are offering 20 oz. bottles of water for \$3.50 each. The stadium's hundred-plus security cameras were said to be in good working order.

### THE CANDIDATES' RECORDS ON SKATING

Challenger Katz Would Open Famed Park to Skating;  
Katz & Street Both Favor Schuylkill River Skatepark;  
Neither Wants City Footing the Bill

JFK PLAZA, Phila.—One sunny morning in late May, Republican mayoral candidate Sam Katz assembled the city's reporters to the southeastern corner of JFK Plaza. He set up a podium in front of the Robert Indiana sculpture, which gives the park the nickname "LOVE." Katz declared that if elected, he would "liberate" the park from a three-year-old ban on skateboarding. LOVE Park, he said, represented something more than a place for young people to roll about on wheeled boards. It was a symbol not just for skateboarding, but for the entire city of Philadelphia and its desire to attract more "youthful energy and enthusiasm," more "buzz," more college graduates, more tourists. Katz even brought along his own skateboard, which he gamely rode over a few flat feet of granite tile, his knees bent slightly, arms extended for balance, cuffs rolled up just past his wrists.

Katz was joined at the podium by 18-year-old Bill Orsi, a student at Temple University, who described Katz's position on the issue as "awesome." The spectacle of the 53-year-old suit palling around with his new young friend in the shadow of City Hall made for a charming series of images, which appeared on the news that night and in the papers the next morning. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that "skateboarders of Philadelphia embraced Republican Sam Katz as their new hero," despite the fact that there were fewer than fifty skateboarders in attendance at the Katz press conference, and Orsi was the only one who spoke. Skateboarders, the *Inquirer* suggested, were ready to show their collective support for any old man brave enough to climb on a board.

Three years ago, the question of the legal status of skateboarding in Philadelphia existed only in the minds of a handful of activists like Brian Nugent, Joshua Nims and Elizabeth Kerr. But after Mayor John Street closed LOVE Park to skateboarding in the spring of 2002, the issue has become a citywide question of policy, raised by the editorials of daily newspapers, debated in the halls of City Council, and incorporated into the agendas of political hopefuls. Even officials from incumbent Mayor Street's administration who once vigorously defended Street's \$1 million program to force skateboarders out of the park now say the City might consider a new compromise proposal to partially legalize skateboarding in the park, according to the *Philadelphia Daily News*.

Both the Street and Katz campaigns say their candidates support the idea of a skate-friendly city in principle, as well as a proposal for a new skatepark. Both candidates say they will be looking to skateboarders to independently raise the money for any such project from private corporate sponsors. The bulk of this work will likely fall on the shoulders of Franklin's Paine, a non-profit founded by Brian Nugent and Joshua Nims, which has already raised tens of thousands of dollars for skatepark construction and college scholarships. While the City Planning Commission has spent \$30,000 coming up with a conceptual design for the site and offered staff for presentations to donors, neither Katz nor Street has committed substantial funds or resources to assist the skateboarders with this fundraising effort, which would likely need to raise more than \$1 million to either perform a second renovation of LOVE Park for skateboarding or build a new public skatepark at a site along the Schuylkill River near the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Philadelphia's skateboarders are still hundreds of thousands of dollars away from regaining what they had for a decade at LOVE Park—a free place to skate in Center City.

#### THE CAMPAIGN VALUE OF LOVE PARK

Unless Street matches Katz's promise to open LOVE Park to skateboarding, the issue may prove to be of particular benefit to Katz, who is running as a Republican in a city that's about three-quarters registered Democrats. Katz, who lost the last mayoral election to Street by a scant 9,447 votes, has deftly used his stance on LOVE Park to reach out to voters who have nothing to do with skating. The way Katz has framed his position on LOVE Park will likely appeal to white Center City Democrats. Katz has made skateboarding relevant to these potential swing voters by linking skateboarding activity to Center City's overall economic health and public image. LOVE Park's impact, the argument goes, comes both from tax dollars gener-

ated through skate shops, events, and the salaries of professional skateboarders; and from less quantifiable benefits like improving the city's image by associating it with exciting and youthful pastimes. These fringe benefits are the most difficult to prove but have a great deal of utility to Katz, a businessman looking to distance himself from the Republican party's establishment reputation. They have less value to Street, whose campaign is focusing on generating a high turnout from the incumbent's mostly loyal bases in the neighborhoods, the unions, and the black community.

Joshua Nims, who has been lobbying City Hall on behalf of Philadelphia's skateboarders for the last three years, said in an interview that he hoped all voters would thoroughly acquaint themselves with the substance of both candidates' records and positions, both in and outside skateboarding.

"Katz is saying 'I support skateboarding, and I support a free LOVE Park, so get out there and register to vote, and vote for me.' But that's not really an issue to base your whole vote for mayor on. And because it's an election issue, there's a tremendous potential for manipulation and distortion of the facts."

**JOHN STREET'S RECORD**  
In the autumn of 2001, Mayor John Street began to put together what his administration called a "refurbishment" plan for LOVE Park. At the beginning of May 2002, the park was shut down while Synterra Ltd. undertook a \$1 million contract to transform the park from one of the East Coast's most-used skate areas to a tranquil lunch spot for office workers and high-rise residents. Synterra's owner, Bill Wilson, has donated at least \$86,000 to Street's campaign since 1996. Zakia Thomas, who listed her occupation as an engineer for Synterra, gave an additional \$5,000 to Street's campaign this spring, according to campaign finance reports. Synterra removed LOVE Park's armless granite benches, which had been a favorite surface for skateboarders. They also replaced some of the park's flat, open stone expanses with manicured patches of grass and flowers, and interrupted others with three-foot high pink concrete planters.

In addition to these renovations, which made the park less attractive to skateboarders, police began to maintain a presence at the park twenty-four hours a day. Skating had been illegal at the park since 2000, but only after Street's spring 2002 renovations was the law strictly enforced.

Skateboarders were further angered by forceful explanations from administration spokesman Frank Keel.

"What is being transformed now is the battered, bruised and cracked desolation that was LOVE Park," Keel said.

He suggested that skateboarders were an undesirable and criminal element.

"...No one wants these skaters in their neighborhood, even if they can't see or hear them most of the time," Keel said.

Meanwhile, preparations were underway for Philadelphia's second X-Games, to be televised worldwide on ESPN. The event showcases so-called "extreme sports," including BMX riding and several styles of skateboarding. Combined, the 2001 and 2002 X-Games brought at least \$80 million and 20,000 hotel room nights to Philadelphia. The City suspended its skating ban for the duration of the event, and permitted the construction of a street skateboarding course on the plaza surrounding City Hall. But as soon as the X-Games left town, round-the-clock surveillance at LOVE Park resumed.

Many professional skateboarders and grass-roots skateboarding groups like Franklin's Paine claim that the city never would have been able to land the X-Games had it not been for LOVE Park.

"Philadelphia doesn't deserve the X-Games," professional skateboarder Stevie Williams told fans at a X-Games-sponsored forum. "Philly isn't giving back to where it came from."

ESPN's version, however, conforms to Mayor Street's theory that it was the city's facilities and reputation as a host, not LOVE Park, that attracted the X-Games' \$80 million. Melissa Gullotti, a spokeswoman for the X-Games, said via email that while ESPN considered LOVE Park's history "an added bonus," it was

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### ROAMING SKATERS COST THOUSANDS, OWNERS COMPLAIN

City Council Passes Nutter's Bill;  
Triples the Fine for Skating in  
Private/Public Plazas to \$75

### RIZZO ADVISES SKATER TO FIND A NEW SPORT

Bicyclists and Rollerbladers Now  
Face Same Penalties as Skaters

CITY HALL, Phila.—The minimum fine for skateboarding in LOVE Park and downtown office plazas has tripled from \$25 to \$75 under a bill sponsored by Fourth District City Councilman Michael Nutter and passed into law at Council's final session this June. Bicyclists and rollerbladers will also face \$75 fines and the possible confiscation of their gear if they roll through private office plazas.

The bill was passed after property managers for several downtown high-rises complained that skateboarders cost them tens of thousands of dollars annually in damage to stone, increased security, and preventative structures like knobs on handrails.

What follows are selections from the transcript of a public hearing held by City Council's Committee on Public Property, before the bill was passed. The meeting was held in Room 696 of City Hall on Thursday, May 29 at 1:45 p.m. The "[...]" sign indicates that a portion of the original 26,000-word document has been skipped.

We bring this hearing to the public's attention now, two months later, because it illustrates views from the three groups with a stake in the skateboarding issue: property owners, lawmakers and the skateboarders themselves.

#### APPEARING BELOW:

MICHAEL NUTTER, City Councilman for the Fourth District  
JAMES KENNEY, City Councilman-at-Large  
FRANK RIZZO, City Councilman-at-Large  
JANNE BLACKWELL, City Councilwoman for the Third District  
LARRY ZIPF, Vice President of BOMA, Building Owners & Managers Association  
DON HAAS, Operations Manager of the Bell Atlantic Tower  
BRIAN WINTERS, Co-Owner of SkateNerd

#### TRANSCRIPT:

**COUNCILMAN NUTTER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be brief. Mr. Chairman, this matter primarily comes to us as a result of a number of meetings and requests from property owners, large building owners almost all of whom are members of the organization called BOMA, Building Owners and Managers Association. Their concerns are the damage to their private property, which is fully accessible to the public. And the primary purpose of this Bill is to deal with that particular issue, where the open space that the public travels through but is technically owned by private property owners, their concern is that it continues to be somewhat unprotected, not only from damage from skateboards, but also roller blades and bicycles. As I've

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**FIVE YEAR DIARY**  
JANUARY 7TH, 1960. Daddy had his operation, quite successful. We could not visit him because of terrible fog. We stayed home

and did our knitting. Cooked chicken with Milly. Sold my bike. 22.10. JANUARY 8TH, 1960. Did all washing by hand. Ironed it all in afternoon. Mommy able to go to hospital. Daddy well and pleased to see us. Came

home had supper watched TV. JANUARY 9TH, 1960. Did shopping in morning. Went riding with Mary after lunch. Met Nelson went out to tea. Rushed home. Met Mrs. Lansdale in case. Went to hospital. Went to...





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## The President's Lies

For months, President George W. Bush's disregard for the rule of law has repeatedly tested our capacity for outrage. From his defilement of our civil liberties to his savage abuse of prisoners of war, Mr. Bush seems to believe that the Constitution is like a bespoke suit of clothes that he can trim and tailor to fit the contours of his latest subterfuge. Only now has the national press begun to acknowledge that Mr. Bush's disrespect applies to not only constitutional rules, but to ontological ones as well. Ever since 9-11, Mr. Bush's administration has willfully ignored that set of propositions most sacred to science, public policy, and human progress in general—the facts themselves.

It is now common knowledge that a sixteen-word allegation about Nigerian uranium in Mr. Bush's January State of the Union speech was based on a forged document, and that high-level advisors at the White House and the CIA were well aware that the allegation was false months before Mr. Bush ever gave the speech. Faced with the untruth of the sixteen words and strong evidence of Mr. Bush's foreknowledge, the administration has been caught in a lie. This lie looms large when held up beside our last president's blushing denial of marital infidelity, which led to his impeachment. But compared to the White House's boilerplate mythology about the axis of evil, Mr. Bush's sixteen words were a very small lie, a tiny note within a brilliantly executed symphony of lies that have dominated the national consciousness since 9-11. Mr. Bush lies all the time. Most of his lies are expressions of hope or desire disguised as facts, assertions like "Saddam Hussein is a threat to America" or "Iraqis will welcome us with open arms." Unlike the sixteen words, these everyday lies are hard to disprove.

The lies do not represent a failure or negligence of duty on the part of the administration; they were, in fact, part of its plan. In the case of Watergate and the Lewinsky scandal, unlawful, illegal or merely ill-advised things were done in secret, and then buried under a series of lies, deceptions, false or misleading admissions. The outrage of the public was due in large part to seeing these cover-ups unravel, secrets then exposed to the light of day as "shocking revelations." But the Bush administration did the reverse, spending almost two years devising false alibis for the crime that they were about to commit. They knew that they would eventually be caught in the lie, but only after it had served its purpose providing a flimsy cover for the

aggressive capture of territory and resources. Millions of Americans accepted the case for war in good faith and engaged in earnest debate, only to later learn that most of what they'd been told was false. In hindsight, Mr. Bush's series of claims about Iraq makes for ridiculous reading: Saddam kills his own people. Saddam has a gun at our head. Saddam and Osama are buddies. Saddam engineered September 11th. Saddam is Hitler with a larger moustache. Saddam has chemical weapons and is about to use them on you. Saddam is about to have nuclear weapons and wants to use them on you. Even the term "pre-emptive" war was itself a lie, making an unprovoked act of raw aggression more palatable with the rhetoric of self-defense. But coming from the White House, everyone from Congress to the *New York Times* took it seriously.

When confronted with his shameless and repeated lies on matters of war, Mr. Bush has responded with further perjury. Faced with the untruth of the sixteen words, Mr. Bush manufactured yet another novel excuse for the war, claiming that we went into Iraq because Saddam evicted the United Nations weapons inspectors. In fact, the final report of Chief Inspector Hans Blix states that the inspectors' work was often hampered by Mr. Bush's impatience, and the inspectors were hard at work when Mr. Bush, not Saddam, told them to get out because American bombs were about to start dropping.

We who trouble ourselves with tedious matters like accuracy and fairness are having trouble pinning down Mr. Bush's sundry and fluid versions of events. By repeatedly refusing to acknowledge what is plainly the case, by answering simple and direct questions from Congress and the press with further obfuscations, non sequiturs, and lies, Mr. Bush has reduced the conversation between the country and its leadership to meaningless chatter. There can be no dialog between estranged parties without a mutual respect for factual evidence and a mutual willingness to make truthful representations about present states of affairs. How can a nation settle its disagreements peacefully if its citizens are unable to exchange ideas in a frank and open manner with those in power? The only language Mr. Bush respects is the language of violence, and it is with sadness and foreboding that we predict more and more Americans will school themselves in that language as they realize that their words no longer matter.

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There is one type of project that we always, always like to see: Find a book, a play, a publication, a band, a restaurant, a bodega, a park, a person, or anything else that's in Philadelphia, that's never before been written about, ever, and that you're excited about, and be the very first person to explain in print exactly what makes this thing so great.

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SALSOLITO - 602 South St.  
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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tell us what you think about this newspaper generally, or anything herein, or anything elsewhere.  
Send your letter for publication to [letters@phindie.com](mailto:letters@phindie.com) or  
THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT, Bureau of Letters, 1026 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Penna 19107

### RE(2): ON VOTING

DEAR PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT:

I was happy to find my letter on the negative aspects of voting in your June issue, and I am writing to remark on Mark Lotto's editorial reply.

Firstly, while the Democrats and the Republicans are indeed different in some important details, they are interchangeable in that neither party offers an alternative to global capitalism. Because the Democrats fail to do so, and given that no other party has even the remotest chance of winning, one is voting for the destruction of the Earth if one votes at all.

Secondly, independent, collective communities and businesses have not generally "failed" to prove a sustainable option," as Mark suggests. The ones that have been the most inspiring and successful have often been crushed, sometimes violently, sometimes by way of some very unfair economic strategy, but shining examples of better social arrangements and economies are an immediate threat to the churches and governments of this world. Mark asked if I would rather women had not acquired the right to vote. Actually, I'd rather they had never given men permission to parcel out their power and feed it back to them in morsels. There really isn't any such thing as a "right." A person either has, or does not have political power.

Mark writes that "removing our current president from office is an immediate necessity." Mark is right, but this and every other possible situation between these larger-than-life, Presidential suits always will be immediate, while the long-term goal, I feel, is to fold the empire and dissolve the government. From that point, we are capable of wonders that stagger the mind. From there, we stand a chance against predator-corporations and religious fanatics; a chance to solve everyday problems like food, transportation, and health care—but without interference for a change. Let's remove the current president, as well as the organism that transformed that mediocre, local man into an international gangster.

"It boils down to where a person places their faith. Mine goes into the community: straight into the faces I see around me, here in this city. Our government neither protects nor serves the community. It is the general parasite that trains us to fear one another. Casting a vote is like praying to a demon, when it deserves only a solemn curse.

SINCERELY,  
ROBERT P. HELMS  
GERMANTOWN

### RE: THE VICTORY BUILDING

TO THE EDITOR:

Your excellent story on the Victory building [Issue Nine, Page Four] left out an important piece of its history—the effort to prevent demolition in the 1990s. When Mayor Rendell took office in January 1992, I was Deputy Chief of Staff and was tasked with trying to figure out the Rendell administration's position on the Victory building. Mayor Goode had gone to great lengths to prevent Sam Rappaport from demolishing the building. However, Mayor Rendell wanted to study the situation and determine whether reuse was really feasible. Joseph Torsella (then policy director, now the president and CEO of the National Constitution Center) and I spent over a year searching for alternatives. One thing that helped: the Preservation Coalition did a great job of grassroots organizing and hundreds of people sent letters to the mayor, asking him to prevent demolition. But despite Mayor Rendell's intervention, Rappaport would not budge and Jefferson University showed no interest in the building. Rappaport continued to threaten to demolish in an attempt to get the City to buy him out. Joe and I thought we might have to stand in front of the bulldozers!

In the end, we stalled long enough to allow for two events that changed the building's future. First, in 1993, the Convention Center opened a few blocks away; this immediately made the 1000 block of Chestnut Street more valuable. Second, Rappaport passed away. To their credit, his estate was much more open to offers and compromises. Jefferson has finally come around—as we knew they would. Sometimes saving historic buildings takes time and tenacity.

SINCERELY,  
TERRY GILLEN  
FITLER SQUARE  
"WHY UNCLE"

He had a stroke: the last in a long line of unrecoverable misfortunes. From time to time I had received glimpses of him on holidays and the like. He was generally on the move. My mother didn't speak much about him, I guess because she knew he was soon to be a corpse, but she did what she could to make his days bearable, perhaps for her. He had said to me:

She should quit it sometime, referring to my mother, but I had thought he was only hiding shame with pride. Now I knew he meant them.

Most every night I sat up with the lights off in a state of false paralysis thinking about the word *nomad*. In my sturdy but creaking bed, the word sounded strange and imposing, like the word *horizon*, that thing people seemed to disappear into in old Westerns, or the mysteriously named floating-point processor I had read about working down in a computer's guts. But now it seemed more like the name of some aberrant doctrine that stemmed directly from the handiwork of some ancient devils. It filled me with unexplainable anxiety, but I long sustained a desire to follow it to its logical conclusion.

Our old neighbor Cordoban was sitting at the table, eating the remains of a scarce breakfast, when I came downstairs. My mother nodded towards a bowl of cold, sugary cereal when she saw me looking at her, then looked back at Cordoban, who had apparently just been interrupted.

—Well, I don't know exactly ... I've known him for a long time though, you know we grew up together. I never could get a good read on him, you know, one that lasted like ... I'll tell you though ...

He sat rearranging the bits of food on his plate, swirling streaks into the film of grease that would have oozed gently away had he paused for a moment or two. He was no doubt considering his next statement at length, or at least trying to appear so. Perhaps he had difficulty editing the reels of knowledge he possessed. God, the crusty old bastard! He always attempted to look scholarly, the wrinkles on his forehead deepening with each word he uttered, every syllable coming forth as though he thought it might be his last. No doubt he had great medical knowledge, or used to have some job in medicine, but his arcane witticisms and measured opinions were soon lost on me.

I have a hypothesis of my own, he said. It stands to reason that it was one of those ... abnormal cases ... But, it's difficult to make a definite judgment, really ...

He turned his plastic glass, half empty, in a stationary circle, the ring of water drops spreading by degrees outward from its base. He hadn't elucidated his point. My mother saw the glazed, spiteful look in my eye as I sat still, hunched over the bowl of cereal in mid-bite, and spoke to me ...

ANDREW ROMERO  
FAIRMOUNT

### A FEAST, FREE TO ALL

TO THE EDITOR:

Permit me, through the medium of your paper, to speak a few words relative to the Wagner Free Institute of Science.

The great struggle of the age is to make science more democratic, and as the great want of the age is a humanizer, where can be found a more efficient one than in science? To make science important to the popular mind is an object of the highest importance, and this can only be done by introducing the sciences into our community—we must eradicate that old an execrable prejudice that restricts science to the few, under the belief that it is impossible to impart it to the masses. Science must be appreciated as the greatest blessing of the human family; yet no one could pretend that even in this country science is a popular attainment. Science is still confined to a very select few.

Let it be borne in mind that the Wagner Free Institute of Science is still in active operation, delivering free lectures to the young and old alike, on the most important and interesting scientific subjects, by able and talented profes-

sors throughout the city. The subjects discussed comprise botany, mineralogy, anatomy, physiology, geology, astronomy, paleontology, anthropology, zoology, &c. These lectures are also given free, so that the poor enjoy equal advantage with the rich.

Here are all invited, without reservation, men and women alike, to partake of the rich, intellectual banquet, which the lavish hand of Science spreads for her votaries. Here the young apprentice, instead of spending his or her evenings at the theatre, or in evil company of some sort, come and drink in from the ever-flowing fount of science, the sweet waters of knowledge, which will render to him life-enduring pleasure.

It is only necessary for the community to know and appreciate such an institution, and to partake of its advantages, in order to make men, women and children wiser and better and happier than they are.

Sincerely,

A FRIEND TO EDUCATION

PERSONAL JOURNAL

DEAR MS. HUNT:

For about a month now I've been meticulously scouring *The Wall Street Journal*. The *Journal* is the only paper I trust; that is, the only paper I trust to deliver stock information. It's not that I have any money or options listed in it. I don't work for any of the companies listed either. But I'm drawn to it. I'm fascinated and I must look on.

The lives of every American, indeed, everyone in the world, are made and lost within strange algorithms (which only I know). Nowhere is there a person unaffected. The loneliest hermit, the quietest nun, the serene African tribesman, they can all be relocated by a company with enough money, power and motivation.

Days go by, then weeks, and the numbers do their feverish dance. They bend and move, spiraling around each other. Sometimes they plummet, sometimes they skyrocket, sometimes they eat one another, occasionally they wink out of existence.

I make notes in the margins of the paper. Of course I write them in a complex cypher, lest anyone figure out what I'm doing. Mostly, I'm writing notes to the company. I will see to it that they pay for their laziness.

Sometimes, I write my notes on the indexes directly instead of just in the margins. I cut out stocks and paste them in conical graphs by sector. I've got a room full of these 3-D graphs. I've built shelves to arrange them by date.

I have important work to do. There are charts to be made, reports to file, old figures and new must be checked and doublechecked, even though I never make a mistake. I feel godlike, watching them with grim amusement, and I can see how they are reacting to my every whim. By watching my playthings dividing and oozing and cupulating like amoeba under a glass, I become greater than all of them. They go about their daily business, certain that they control their destinies, but how wrong they are.

Consider, Ms. Hunt, how it pleases me to imagine the people in these companies, all working so hard to curry my favor. They are always scraping for their next promotion, and working to meet deadlines. Pushing papers from one desk to another, signing here, initialing there. Striking deals and shaking hands to clinch it. Working through lunch, working overtime, all to show me how faithful they are. It's a lot of foolishness, of course. I rarely get involved.

Sincerely,  
EARNEST MORAY

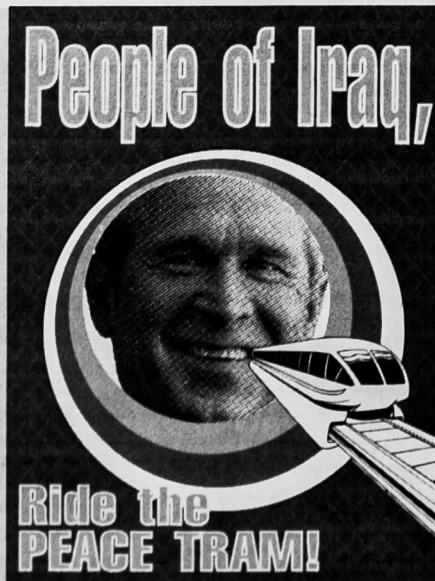
## Chaos in California

from RECALL, page 1

Republican Congressman Darrell Issa, the not-quite-self-made car-alarm millionaire who poured \$1.7 million of his own money into the recall campaign. Issa, who recently told the *New York Times* he had an I.Q. of "100 plus a little bit," would be absolutely unelectable in a regularly scheduled statewide election: his extremely conservative record aside, there are increasing questions about his past, including the fact that as a young man he was arrested on felony charges (among them car theft and the unlawful possession of a handgun) in three different states.

The field is crowded with maybes, most of whom have an excess of money, ambition, and/or idle free time. Current toe-dippers include: former L.A. mayor Richard Riordan, businessman Bill Simon (who lost to Davis once already in 2000), Republican state Senator Tom McClintock, U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein, Politically Incorrect commentator Ariana Huffington (whose ex-husband Michael Huffington may also enter the race) and, yes, Arnold Schwarzenegger, whom we like to remember less for his work in the Terminator than in

Kindergarten Cop. This thing is, we'll admit, a whole hell of a lot of fun. There simply hasn't been time for politicians to prep their usual, sanitized, focus-grouped campaigns, and so instead we have what can only be compared to a backyard-league Royal Rumble. Still, the recall of Gray Davis, who's committed no real crimes beyond being a dull but fiscally irresponsible New Democrat, remains a gross misapplication of a law that was created almost one hundred years ago to protect Californians from politicians in the pocket of the railroad interests. The state constitution sets no criteria at all for the recall proceedings. You don't have to win a majority of the votes. You just have to win more votes than anybody else. In fact, Davis could lose the recall ballot by the slimmest of margins only to see someone installed as governor with as little as ten percent of the replacement vote. All of which means that Issa and, well, just about anybody else, has a shot at the governorship of our most populous state. All you need to enter the race is sixty-five signatures and a \$3,500 filing fee. There could be worse ways to spend the rest of your summer vacation.





## COUNCIL & SKATERS CLASH AT HEARING

from HEARING, page 1

stated previously on this particular matter, I am certainly not against any of the appropriate uses of these items, but the concern for property damage, especially for private property owners, does compel me to put this measure forward, listen to the testimony, and see if we can further protect these large property owners who are significant taxpayers in our city from this kind of damage to their private property. So I appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Chairman.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much. Councilmember Blackwell. COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much [...] I don't believe that we should prohibit people using roller blades or bicycles. I didn't support some of the stuff that we've done in the past dealing with quality-of-life issues. And I don't support not being able to use roller blades or bicycles as well as folks not being able to skateboard. I believe that the City is working with those skateboarders to try to find a site and that the City, the Administration, has for sometime.

But it's just that the whole issue— you know, in America there's a place for everybody. We may have to try to find out where that should be, and I think that's the issue. The rub is where we can find a place to we want to respect homeowners and business owners, and we want to respect the rights of young people who certainly also want to ride their bikes or roller blade or skateboard. So I think that's the rub. That comes down to the issue, where it works, not the activity itself. [...]

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: We've supported many sports in this City. And as the roller hockey craze grew, we built roller hockey rinks. As the tennis craze grew, we built tennis courts. We build just about everything that anyone would like, and the City should be actively involved in the skateboard park and other roller-type facilities. [...]

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Mr. Zipf, could you give us some examples or if you have any handouts that could put financial figures into the record indicating the different buildings that have been impacted by this activity, the amount of damage sustained at these particular locations?

MR. ZIPF: Yes, I can. The Bell Atlantic Tower has incurred approximately \$88,000 in damage. Additionally, they spend \$8,000 a year in prevention, and an additional \$5,000 in security patrols. 1700 Market Street has spent over \$10,000 installing marble guards in the seating areas as well as thousands of dollars to clean the marble and replace trash receptacles. United Plaza has spent over \$25,000 in repairs just during a six-month period for damages caused by skateboarders. 1600 Market Street is just over \$5,000. The granite pavers have been damaged and replaced at a cost of \$25,000 each. Penn Center has probably suffered the greatest damage at \$130,000. They've had to replace all their building handrails, light fixtures, and they have installed round knobs on the top of the handrails but they continue to be abused. The last example would be 102 Commerce Square (which) has spent over \$60,000 repairing and retrofitting signage, pavers, and benches. It does not include additional security costs on a daily basis and costs that were incurred during the X-Games when the skateboarders were most prevalent in the city. That totals about \$318,000. Many of these are annual recurring costs.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So your position is you have these great buildings, open plazas, I guess they were designed such that people would utilize them, walk through, sit down, eat lunch, look at the sky, whatever it is that people want to do. And your position is you'd like people to continue to enjoy your open plazas, but you'd not like to have them destroyed by activity that the plazas were not designed for; is that right?

MR. ZIPF: That's an accurate summary, yes, sir. [...]

MR. HAAS: My name is Don Haas with the Bell Atlantic Tower at 1717 Arch. The Bell Atlantic Towers is a 1.2 million square foot high-rise office building in the City. We have a beautiful plaza that's been thoroughly destroyed over the years by the skateboarders, bicycle riders. The roller blades haven't been much of a problem. But everybody who wants to grind comes to the Bell Atlantic Tower. The damage to the stone has cost us well in excess of \$80,000. And that doesn't even take into consideration the personal liability issues that you could have with people getting hurt. [...] Answering Mr. Rizzo's comment about the police, it really depends on the 911 priorities. If you're calling at 2 o'clock on a Saturday night, you're pretty well low on the totem pole if you have a lot of other activity going on in the city. And that's when you get a lot of activity. You get people, car-loads in. You go out and take the license plate numbers down, rarely is it a Pennsylvania plate. We get Jersey plates, New York plates, Delaware. It's amazing. The ranges of ages can be from 20 to 25 year olds and you can have 20 of them in a pack. You can some younger kids, 15 to 20, just skateboarding around the whole day. It's very disruptive. Thank you. [...]

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to testify on this Bill? Please identify yourself.

MR. WINTERS: My name is Brian Winters. I live in Philadelphia. I'm 24 years old. I own a small business in Old City. I provide technical services and a retail outlet for people to shop at. I want to make this quick and simple, not trying to suck up anybody's time, but without a place or provisions for me to skateboard, I'm still going to skate these places that you've mentioned before. By raising the fine, I'm just going to run faster. It's been something I've been doing for ten years, trying to evade cops so I don't get the fine. [...]

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What kind of business do you own?

MR. WINTERS: I own a retail store in Old City. It's a retail outlet.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Can I ask you question? Baseball is like the American pastime—one of the American pastimes. If I decided that I wanted to have a hard ball game across the street from your store and had my friend Michael Nutter here pitch me hard balls and I batted them against your window, wouldn't you call the police? Or would you think that that was my right to engage in a sport of my choosing at the place that I chose?

MR. WINTERS: If it was intentional—

### COUNCILMAN RIZZO:

Are you a business person that has—you sell skateboard equipment and supplies; is that what you do?

MR. WINTERS: Can I get the words out of my month without being interrupted?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: No, you can't until I'm finished.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: No, I'm not intentionally trying to break anything. I'm playing baseball where I want to play it and he's pitching me the ball and I'm hitting will where I want to hit it. And if it breaks your window on your retail store, you wouldn't call the police? You'd say, "No problem, fellows. Enjoy yourself."

MR. WINTERS: I think that if there was baseball field a block away from where we're playing baseball in front of my store, I would ask you if you could kindly go down there and let's work on fixing my window.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Why? What's wrong with what the Councilman wants to do?

MR. WINTERS: It's just common sense. COUNCILMAN NUTTER: He just doing what he wants to do our in front of your place. What's the problem?

MR. WINTERS: There's provisions for him to play baseball a block away from store. I think I'd ask him if he would go play there.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: The City is in the process of building a skateboard park.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: We have one already.

MR. WINTERS: I have heard nothing about a skateboard park and seen nothing about a skateboard park.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: We have a skateboard park at Franklin Roosevelt Park, which is known as The Lakes in South Philadelphia.

MR. WINTERS: And how can I get there? I don't have a car or a bike.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You have a subway which drops you at Broad and Pattison Avenue.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Ride your skateboard. Actually, the subway stop at Broad and Pattison is right at the entrance of the park.

MR. WINTERS: SEPTA's pretty expensive. It's going to be the most expensive public transportation system to use in the nation in another few months.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: That's a different hearing for a different day. Let me ask you a question. Do you allow shoplifting at your retail store?

MR. WINTERS: I don't allow that, no. That wouldn't be a very wise business decision by me, would it?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: You think it's a wise business decision for these folks to let people continue to destroy their property?

MR. WINTERS: That's not what I'm trying to get at.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I'm not sure what you're trying to get at. I'm asking you do you allow people to do things to your business that are illegal—

MR. WINTERS: No.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: —and are against your business interest? That's what I'm asking you now as a business person.

MR. WINTERS: No.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

MR. WINTERS: But if it's in the interest of a community around my business to work with them to keep those baseballs from flying through my window, I would be more than willing to build a baseball park or a place to go and swing that bat.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, let's say the folks came in and say, "Hey, it's our community interest to have as many of your goods as possible in our hands without paying for them." Is that okay with you? It's in the com-

munity interest. I don't know what your retail business is; you don't have to tell me. But whatever it is, the community believes it's in their community interest to have as many of your goods in their hands as possible without stopping by the little cash register there. Is that something you support.

MR. WINTERS: I support shopping at my business.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: But not shoplifting?

MR. WINTERS: No.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: That's fine. No problem.

MR. WINTERS: My statement is purely I think it would be wiser decision to work towards providing a space for people with bikes, roller blades and skateboards to go to, to direct them to rather than to raise this fine to deter them and send a message across that we don't want you in this city at all. There aren't any hard boundaries what determines public and private space.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Yes, there is. It's called a deed. Inside the deeded area is private property.

MR. WINTERS: A deed's not posted on every wall in the City. It's not posted on signs. I don't recognize that when I'm just walking around casually minding my business getting something to eat.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: You know, I don't want to continue making all these examples, but something just hit me. Do you think a person just wanted to go to any one of these properties and set up their barbecue grill and invite five or six friends down and have a barbecue cue in the courtyard, do you think that's okay?

MR. WINTERS: Aren't those what the roach coaches are on each corner?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: No, I'm talking about somebody pulls a charcoal barbecue grill in the center of the courtyard and invites ten of their friends down for a barbecue. You think that's okay?

MR. WINTERS: No. Not without permission.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, why do you think you should be able to go skateboarding on that same property without permission?

MR. WINTERS: I understand that I'm not allowed to. But the pure substance of my argument is I don't have a place to go and that's why I'm there.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, guess what, you got to change recreation. You got to go play basketball or something until we get it figured out.

MR. WINTERS: So a lifestyle that I have built myself around—

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I hate to be real blunt with you here, but maybe—if you believe that you're violating the law, then you really need to find a different place. If people come from all over the country and the world to skateboard in Philadelphia, and you've just agreed that you're breaking the law, that you shouldn't be doing it. I mean, you seem like a bright young man. You own a business. You don't have to—it's not a question of right and wrong. You understand that it's wrong, correct? And if you get arrested, it's on you.

MR. WINTERS: I understand that. I'm simply trying to make a point that instead of raising these fines to detract people—

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, you're making a stupid point. You're making a really stupid point to say that it's wrong and then complain that the fine shouldn't be increased.

MR. WINTERS: I'm trying to make a point that maybe instead of focusing our energies and our thoughts into making—

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Are you a business—person that has—you sell skateboard equipment and supplies; is that what you do?

MR. WINTERS: Can I get the words out of my month without being interrupted?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: No, you can't until I'm finished. Could you tell me, is that what you do? You sell skateboard accessories and supplies, is that what you do?

MR. WINTERS: I sell mostly books and clothing.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: For skateboard.

MR. WINTERS: Skate related.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So you have a vested interest in this, correct?

MR. WINTERS: Yes.

MR. RIZZO: And you're more concerned about your profit and your ability to sell these magazines and clothing to skateboarders than the—you're not considerate at all to the people that are being harmed here?

MR. WINTERS: I'm here to represent skateboarders because my interests are trying to make—

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Your interest is the dollar. And you should be interested in these folks' dollar too. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much. Thank you for your testimony.

Editor's Note: According to [www.ushistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org), Councilman Rizzo is now one of five council members in favor of a plan to legalize skateboarding in LOVE Park for certain hours and areas. "Let's do what the park says," Rizzo told the Philadelphia Daily News, "Let's LOVE these kids and let them have a good time." The plan also calls for further increasing the fine for skating in office plazas. Councilwoman Blackwell, Marian Tasco and Blondell Reynolds Brown also support the plan, along with Councilman Richard Mariano, according to the website.

## 4-Wheeled Campaign Machine

from LOVE, page 1

not a "primary reason" for bringing the games to Philadelphia. She said the First Union Center, Philadelphia's background in hosting major events, and the City's willingness to partner with ESPN were the major factors that drew the X-Games to Philadelphia.

"The fact that LOVE Park gave Philadelphia a reputation as the best skate city on the East Coast was certainly an element that we liked about the city," Gullotti added.

At the height of LOVE Park's popularity in the middle-to-late 1990s, it drew more than 200 enthusiasts a day, some of whom traveled around the world to skate in Philadelphia.

LOVE Park had been a laboratory for a style of skateboarding called street skating, which took advantage of the site's open expanses of flat granite and its semi-circle of cascading steps ringed by stone benches. Professional skateboarders Stevie Williams, Josh Kalis and Ricky Oyola all skated the park in their early days.

Mayor Street's closure of LOVE Park was more than just an inconvenience to skateboarders in Philadelphia; to many it represented the willful destruction of a monument.

More than 3,000 people have signed an online petition at [www.ushistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org), urging Street to reconsider. The website is run by the private Independence Hall Association (IHA), which has allied itself with Franklin's Paine to legalize skateboarding at LOVE Park.

"I am a skateboarder that works for a Fortune 500 company directly across from LOVE Park, where I spent much of my youth. I honestly am still amazed that the city of Philadelphia would deny itself the free opportunity to bolster its image with that park. It is just another in a long history of steps the city has taken to make it the most unattractive place in the country for young people to live," wrote Chris Braun of Philadelphia.

"Instead of tearing LOVE Park down, you should have made it safer for kids. Instead of using the police to prosecute skateboarding kids, you should have used the police to protect the kids from bad influences. It's not just parents and schoolteachers who have to protect kids, it's the police too. And how many older people are actually strolling in the park at this very moment? More or less than when it was still used by skateboarders?" wrote Peter de Vroomen, from the Netherlands.

The answer is less, although the park is a modest success during the lunch hour, when approximately 100 people were seen relaxing on a sunny Monday in late July at 12:30 p.m. By six o'clock that same night, however, fewer than twelve people remained in the park.

While the Street has held onto the view that LOVE Park should not be a site for skateboarding, his administration has shown a willingness to replace it with a new public site. The city spent \$20,000 to erect a temporary Center City skatepark that required skateboarders to wear protective gear, but the project's design proved unpopular, and it was soon taken down. This month, the City Planning Commission will begin considering contractors for a more ambitious project at the Schuylkill River site that has already won tentative approval from the Fairmount Parks Commission and the Logan Square Neighborhood Association. Maxine Griffith, who heads the City Planning Commission, said the city is committed to funding the project's design at an estimated cost of \$30,000. Griffith said the city's current plan was to rely on skateboarders to help raise the rest of the money from outside sources. SkateNerd, a skate store and design company owned by Brian Nugent and Brian Winters, say they are planning to enter a bid on the project.

While the City hasn't ruled out paying for construction, which could reportedly cost as much as \$2 million, Griffith said local corporations would be approached to contribute.

"Franklin's Paine has volunteered to do fundraising," Griffith said. "Our capital budget situation is not a great one ... this is going to be a partnership. The question is how do we parse out the responsibilities for the partnership."

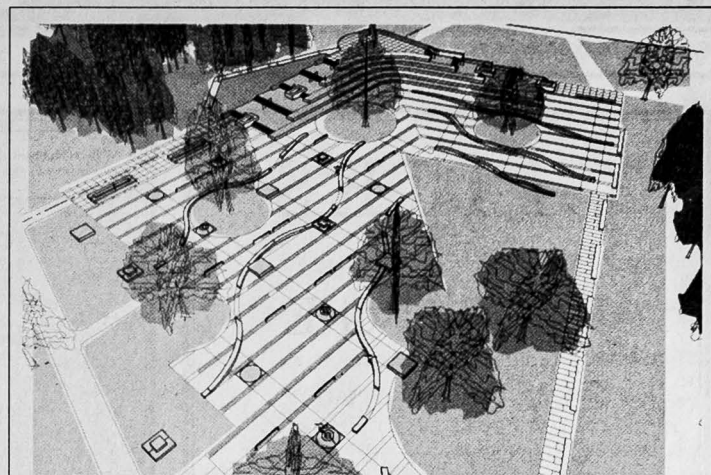
David Schaaf, an urban planner with the City Planning Commission who is working on the Schuylkill River site, said the City was ready to talk with skateboarders about the design.

"Say we're trying to build a box or a centerpiece. We don't know what makes a good grind. That's not something we can do in-house. We want to sit down and facilitate a discussion with the skateboarders who will be using the park and bring them into the design process."

But Street's position on LOVE Park has not budged, according to spokeswoman Christine Ottow.

"LOVE is not a skateboard park. It's a park that is meant for people to come out and enjoy some greenery. Skating is damaging to the surfaces that are not built to sustain the damage. It creates a rundown-looking park when edges get gouged and blackened and cracked."

In the final days of July, the Philadelphia Daily News reported that Griffith would be meeting early this month with supporters of a



One concept for the Schuylkill River Skatepark site, designed by Anthony Bracali and SkateNerd to incorporate many of LOVE Park's features.

compromise proposal, which would partially legalize the park for skateboarders during certain hours, further increase fines for skating on private property, and found a non-profit organization to raise money for the park's operating costs.

### SAM KATZ'S RECORD

Katz first became personally aware of the LOVE Park issue through the efforts of Greg Heller, a student at Wesleyan University, who moved back to Philadelphia for the year to co-author a book with LOVE Park designer Edmund Bacon. Though Heller does not skateboard himself, he has become a liaison for Philadelphia skateboarding, pitching skateboarding to the business community as way to stave off the flight of youth, residents, and capital from downtown.

"It not really about just skateboarding," Heller said in an interview. "It's about the future of Philadelphia. Skateboarding attracts the knowledge industry and sends a message that we're a hip, forward-looking city. It brings in internet companies and design companies."

At a May forum hosted by the Pennsylvania Economy League, Heller drew applause from several hundred businesspeople after he said that LOVE Park's skateboarding history could boost the city's national profile. Katz was at the meeting and told the Philadelphia City Paper that he agreed with Heller's arguments, but that he wasn't ready to reopen the park and see the million-dollar renovation go to waste. Later that month Katz saw Heller again during a campaign event at the RUBA Club. After exchanging a few emails, a representative from the Katz campaign contacted Heller a few weeks later, telling him to show up at LOVE Park the next day with skateboarders for the press conference.

"Here's a guy who's been a businessman all his life," Heller said. "You just don't put yourself out there just to get the skater vote. This is about the youth vote, the vote for growing the city."

Heller said he was sorry the LOVE Park issue hadn't been resolved earlier, but that he had now accepted that the debate was a part of the mayoral race.

"I would have liked to see this thing get resolved before it became a campaign issue. I think it would have been a lot easier."

Heller has also worked with Young Involved Philadelphia (YIP), a group of Philadelphians in their twenties who hold meetings on city policy. YIP was co-founded by Andrew Hohns, who has said he is planning to mount a second challenge against incumbent State Representative Babette Josephs for the 182nd District.

YIP, the IHA and the Skateboard Advocacy Network (SAN), a second skateboarder lobby closely affiliated with Franklin's Paine) have drafted a compromise plan for partially legalizing skateboarding at LOVE Park. The plan calls for resurfacing the park's granite

with a polymer coating and adding steel tips along granite edges to protect them from skateboarders' trucks, the metal axles that connect the wheels to the board. In interviews, some skateboarders said that while it was possible to skate on steel edges, granite was a superior surface. The plan would also further increase fines for skating in unauthorized areas other than LOVE Park, which were recently tripled under a bill sponsored by Fourth District City Councilman Michael Nutter. [See P.1, Col.8]

At a forum hosted by YIP held in early July, a representative from the Katz campaign appeared to embrace Heller's arguments on how skateboarding can add to Philadelphia's image.

"I got sick of hearing about how Philadelphia is only about cheesesteaks," said Dan Pohlig, explaining his decision to settle in Philadelphia after college. "I wanted it to be a cool city. 'Cool' is such a loaded word ... I think we all stopped thinking we were cool after 11th grade. But there is a certain cool factor that we're missing."

In an email outlining Katz's position, Pohlig repeated the challenger's desire to "lift the ban on skateboards in the area known as LOVE Park." He added that Katz would look to sponsors and private donors to fund any improvements or maintenance to the park, and that the timeline for the reopening would depend on City Council's support.

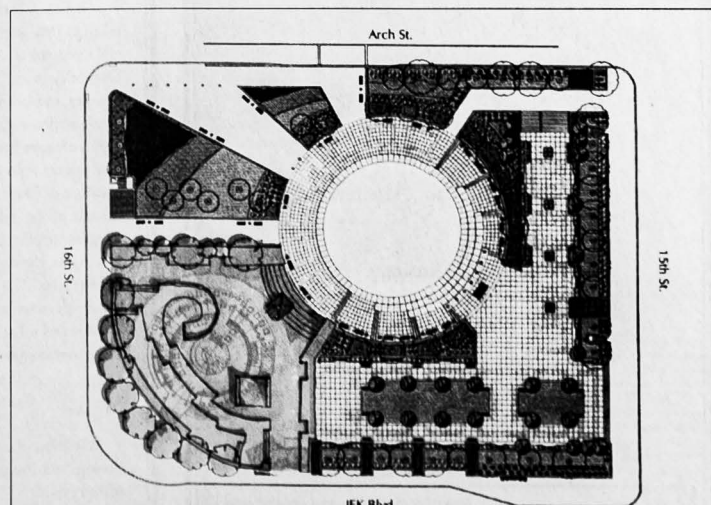
Pohlig said Katz was in favor of continuing to move forward on the Katz campaign skatepark site, and recognized the lack of street skating facilities in Center City. Pohlig recommended that skateboarders continue to directly involve themselves in the political process.

"The role of the skateboarding community in the politics of Philadelphia, both now and in the future, absolutely depends on how many votes they can deliver," Pohlig said.

Pohlig said that if elected, Katz would continue the Street administration's work on the Schuylkill River site. Katz has not yet promised funding for the site, or for any renovations that might be necessary to legalize skating at LOVE Park such as those proposed in the compromise plan.

### FOOTNOTE

At this time, five of Philadelphia's sixteen council seats have backed the compromise plan for a partial legalization of skateboarding at LOVE Park, according to [www.ushistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org). Joshua Nims, one of Franklin's Paine's co-founders, said that the proposal didn't take into account the borderless nature of street skating. "Reopening LOVE is supposed to be about reclaiming a part of Philadelphia's culture ... not literally and financially herding the skateboarders into a centralized location to protect the rest of the Center City plaza areas from skateboarding," he said. The IHA/SAM/YIP coalition is planning a rally at LOVE Park for October 4.



An overhead view of LOVE Park after Mayor Street's renovation.







## METRONAUT

ROLL IT INTO A CONE LIKE A TELESCOPE

Rita taught me all the Italian I know, starting with "mangi." My brother Andy and I were supposed to eat everything she put in front of us on the nights she babysat: microwaved chicken tenders with honey, corn and peas, salad, Tater Tots, and milk. When we said we were full, we were just told to *Mangi! Mangi!* until we'd eaten everything on our plates. Though she's the only person I know who speaks any Italian, she wonders where I could possibly have learned "vaffanculo." The English, "fuck," is forbidden, but she's willing to say it in other languages. I taught her the French: "va te faire foutre," which she likes.

I've known Rita since I was six months old, when she was recommended to my parents by some friends, and she was my first babysitter. I have never known my grandparents, and she has become one to me, albeit one who swears. I don't remember her ever looking any different from how she does now, although I'm sure she's changed over these nineteen years. At seventy-two years old, her fragility is striking. She weighs under a hundred pounds, and through her almost translucent skin you can see tiny, brittle bones and dark bruises. The skin on her wizened face is soft and sags a little. For years she bought creams on the Home Shopping Network that purportedly cured wrinkles. With her bathroom cabinet filled with various miracle lotions and her face unchanged, she finally gave up: "Screw the damn things."

Despite her size and apparent physical weakness, Rita's whole life is self-powered. She walks or rides SEPTA everywhere, while loaded down with a massive purse and a couple of shopping bags. "I'm like horse shit," she often comments, "I'm all over the place." Snailing down the sidewalk, she hunches under the weight she carries and the two sweaters she'll wear in the winter. She will put on a hat only in the most frigid of weather, because, she says, hats make her hair frizz up. I have never understood what she means by frizz; she sprays her bleached blond hair so it always looks like it stands on end.

Rita lives in South Philadelphia, around the corner from the Melrose Diner. She has to

climb two flights of creaky, narrow wooden stairs to get to the third floor. I don't know exactly how long she's had this apartment, but it's been at least thirty years. When her husband was alive, years ago, they lived in a townhouse on the other side of Broad Street, which she regrets selling. But she's used to her rooms now, although she confided in me that the rent has been rising over the years, and is now up to \$300 a month.

The building has mice, which scare Rita but whose presence she's sort of accustomed to.

She is squeamish whenever she looks under her sink or in her closet, afraid that the sight of one, dead or alive, will give her a heart attack. The problem is compounded by her downstairs neighbor, "a sweet girl," who won't kill mice, and lets them run around her apartment. She told Rita that she planned on taking the mice out to the country and letting them free; Rita told me she'd "like to go let her run free in the country."

I know little about her youth, except that she was married at seventeen-and-a-half, went to New York for her honeymoon, and worked for a tailor. She rarely talks about her husband, who's been dead for decades, except in the context of her daughter Marie, who's apparently a lot like her father. I don't even know his first name. Rita did tell me that he was the reason she started smoking cigarettes: "One time he saw me with a pen in my mouth and he got so mad because he thought it was a cigarette. So I said to myself, well, if he don't like cigarettes so much then I'm gonna start smoking!" This she did, for fifty years.

She's only left the Philadelphia region a handful of times, and most of the city she doesn't dare explore. Until she babysat Andy and me and had to take us to the Please Touch

profile  
TWENTY YEARS WITH RITA

The Babysitter Who Taught Me to Curse

BY REBECCA DALZELL

Museum at 21st and Race streets, she hadn't been north of Market Street. When she visited my dorm at Penn last May, it was the first time in fifty years that she'd crossed the Schuylkill River. She goes to New Jersey more than she'd like to, because all her family has moved there, and because she visits people "down the shore" in the summer. She'll never understand why anyone would ever want to live in Jersey,

the bus runs it over!"

Rita's scratchy, weary voice crescendos when she tells these stories, becoming more and more excited and high-pitched as she works herself into nonsensical hysterics. Usually she's laughing at her own jokes. Her laughter is intense and concentrated, as if she's spewing it out after holding it in for too long. Eventually it mounts to a level above the pitch



SOLIMAN LAWRENCE

though Marie is happy there. "Everything's so far," she tells me, "there's nothin' for me to do."

Philadelphia, on the other hand, keeps her busy, and she especially loves people-watching, which gives her lots of stories. A great raconteur, Rita kept us entertained through our long dinners when she watched us. Her stories usually relate to characters she's seen while waiting for the bus or shopping on Broad Street. One story we had her tell often was about a man she saw walking down the street on a windy day, "when all of a sudden, his toupee blows off! And there he goes chasing after it into the street and it just keeps blowin' and blowin' until

of her voice, so while her mouth makes no noise her body rocks giddily back and forth.

Every time I see her, she'll tell me she's got "another one" for me. A recent example: "Yeah you know I was at the hospital the other day for some tests and I had to drink a lot of water and the nurse, she said I wasn't ready yet. Well I told her I wasn't going to be able to hold it no longer and I was gonna pee right there on the floor. Well there I was hollerin' when this cute doctor walked by and you know me I couldn't help myself and I just said, 'Oh, hi Cutie.' He was young, you know. And he says, 'I thought you had to pee and here you go flirtin' with

me!' It was so funny. And then later I find out he's my doctor and so I says, 'Hey Cutie-pie, you'd better not find anything wrong with me!' Ah, this is how I amuse myself."

She seems to be always attracting handsome men, and is shameless around them. Once, while she was waiting at a corner near Rittenhouse Square for the bus, a TV cameraman came up to her and asked what she thought of the Eagles' playoff chances. She knew nothing about them, she said to him, but "I sure know you're cute." Her flirtation once won her table free desserts at Ralph's, on Ninth Street, when she couldn't help but compliment the waiter to his face: "Well ain't you a handsome one."

For a while, nine or ten years ago, Rita dated a man she nicknamed "Tony Baloney." From what my mom and I could deduce, Tony

was crazy about Rita, but she didn't

always want to bother with him. He gave her jewelry and took her out dancing and to dinner. When I asked if he was her boyfriend, she'd tell me, "Naw, we're just havin' fun." On weekends they went to Atlantic City, where Tony had a house. At some point he got a job in Las

Vegas, and I haven't heard much about him since. But sometimes Rita will wistfully remark that at least with Tony she could go out and have some fun.

Rita babysat us until long after we had outgrown it, and has remained in the family as our housekeeper, coming on Fridays. She tells me that my parents are "good people," but her relationship with them is far less candid and vulgar than it is with me. Though my mom often swaps confidences with Rita over a morning cup of coffee, she is surprised when Andy or I report the obscenities that so often spew from Rita's mouth.

Usually when she leaves our house in the afternoon, she'll wander into some of the shops near Rittenhouse Square. If she spots something nice in Liberty Place or the Gap, she tends to be horrified by the price tag. "Things ain't nearly this expensive down my way," she observes, on a weekly basis. Good prosciutto, she seems to think, costs up to fifty percent more "uptown." If I tell her that only the really fancy kind is \$20 a pound, she shrugs it off with a "yeah but it's just not the same."

Since she is so particular about where she buys her Italian food, I've started asking her for recommendations. For bread, of course there's nothing besides Sarcone's, on Ninth Street, and the only place to get cannoli is at 16th and Ritner, Potito's. She regrets not being able to go to the Italian Market more often, but it's far away. Rita's world is confined to convenient bus routes and a six-block radius of her house. But she can get all she needs nearby.

To be honest, she tells me, she doesn't cook at all anymore. There was a time, just a few years ago, when she'd cook for fifteen people on Christmas. Now, though, she rarely even makes herself dinner, saying that she'd just rather get something out. This leaves me with the painful image, perhaps fictitious, of her sitting at a big red booth at Melrose at 5 p.m., eating her beefsteak alone.

I try to call Rita once a week, though I know not to call on Thursday nights, when she doesn't let anything interrupt wrestling on TV. But I have called her at 5:30 in the morning, when I haven't gone to bed yet but she's been up for an hour. Hearing her groggy "Hello?" makes me ask if I've woken her up, but she assures me, "No, I'm just not used to talking, that's all."

At some point in almost all of our conversations Rita will say, "Now Rebecca, let me ask you a question." The question usually pertains to Tracy, her seventeen-year-old granddaughter, whose life often puzzles Rita. I think she takes Tracy to be much more naive than she really is, because two years ago she was questioning whether she even knew about sex. "Honestly," I assured Rita, "it's impossible for her to have avoided the concept." Other times

turn to RITA, page 14

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# THE POKER CIRCUITS

## Celebrity Gamblers Lure Fresh Fish to the Sport as Liquid Crystal Finds Favor Over Felt

### How One 21<sup>st</sup> Century Shark Clicks Out A Living

BY SAM HANDLIN

## GLOSSARY

### OF POKER TERMS

THE LANGUAGE OF THE GAME

**AMERICAN AIRLINES** - A pair of aces in the hole. Also, ROCKETS, BULLETS, or POCKET ROCKETS.

**ANGLESHOOTER** - Someone who tries to gain an advantage using tactics that may not be strictly illegal but are generally frowned upon.

**ANTE** - A small forced bet before the hand begins that gets money in the pot and thus spurs the action.

**BACKER** - Someone who finances a player in exchange for a cut of his winnings.

**BAD BEAT** - A pot lost against improbable odds to an opponent with an inferior starting hand.

**BANKROLL** - The amount of \$\$\$ one has with which to gamble.

**BIG BLIND** - The larger of 2 rotating forced bets that spur the action in HOLD'EM, OMAHA, and a few other games.

**BIG SLICK** - An ACE and KING in the hole.

**BLACKLINE** - A method of marking cards with very fine lines that only the trained eye can generally detect.

**BLANK** - A low card that appears to benefit nobody.

**BOARD** - The community cards in HOLD'EM or OMAHA or the up cards in STUD.

**BOSS TRIPS** - The best THREE of a kind possible in HOLD'EM or OMAHA, given the board.

**BROADWAY** - A straight from ace to ten.

**BUTTON** - The position at the table that is last to act. Traditionally the dealer but with the decline of self-dealing now denoted by a white disk that rotates, along with the blinds, with each hand.

**CALLING STATION** - A weak player who calls too often rather than folding or raising.

**CAP** - To put in the final raise. In most LIMIT games only 3 or 4 raises are allowed on each betting round unless the pot is being contested heads up.

**CHECKS** - Chips

**COFFEEHOUSE** - To talk during a hand, usually to fluster an opponent or gain information from his reaction. Also, HOLLYWOOD.

**COLD CALL** - To call more than one bet at one time in LIMIT games or to call a large bet in POT LIMIT or NO LIMIT.

**COWBOYS** - A pair of kings in the hole. Also, ACE MAGNETS.

**C R A B S** - A pair of threes in the hole.

**CRYING CALL** - A call on the last betting round made when one is likely beaten.

**CUT-OFF** - The player immediately to the right of the BUTTON.

**DEAD MONEY** - A buy-in or tournament entry purchased by a bad player with little chance of winning.

**DIME \$1000**

**DRAWING DEAD** - Having no chance of winning a hand but unwittingly continuing to play it.

**DUCKS** - A pair of twos in the hole.

**FISH** - A weak, losing player.

**FLOP** - The first three community cards, dealt at once, in HOLD'EM or OMAHA.

**GET THERE** - To make a strong hand.

**GUTSHOT** - A straight draw in which a player has four cards with a gap in the middle, and thus can make a straight only by filling that gap. Also, a BELLYBUSTER.

**HEADS UP** - Contested by only 2 players.

turn to GLOSSARY, Page 7

It's two o'clock in the morning, I'm surrounded by fish, but I'm stuck anyway after getting my cowboys cracked on the river by some moron from Idaho. I give my laptop an admonishing stare and decide to drink another beer while I patiently wait for the law of averages to assert itself again over the poker table, hopefully making me some paper in the process. I'm no hotshot hustler, but I'm better than most of these other guys playing \$10-20 Texas Hold'em at Partypoker.com, one of many Internet sites jockeying for action in the booming business of online poker. And I know that if I keep starting with two kings ("cowboys" in poker parlance) versus the queen and eight of hearts held by my weak opponent (a "fish"), I'm going to take his money more often than not, even if he does beat me every once in a while when the last of the five community cards ("the river") that make up our hands is dealt.

It's a good time to be a winning poker player, even if you're just a small stakes chump like myself trying to grind out a few dollars to slow the unemployment burn rate. The online sites are boasting record numbers and the poker rooms in Vegas, A.C., and other gambling Meccas are rocking to the din of chips, chips, chips being rifled, stacked, and shoved into pots. Even the Manhattan underground club I used to frequent was dotted with new faces when I popped in a few weeks ago. New players generally mean new suckers and that's good for the more experienced cardsharps, not to mention the sites and casinos hosting the action. Right now Party Poker is running over 300 online tables each dealing fifty to seventy hands an hour. Since the site takes ("rakes" in the lingo) a couple bucks from each pot, that's a whole lot of profit when the majority of your overhead is spent maintaining a few servers in Costa Rica and paying a handful of tech support geeks.

But Party Poker and its competition aren't the only enterprises making some bank off the poker phenomenon - on Thursday, May 29, one day after the Travel Channel broadcast its weekly World Poker Tour show, on which several poker books were advertised, a whopping six of Amazon's Top 100 book sales for the day were poker related. Poker books, poker magazines, poker classes, poker movies, poker cruises, poker software, and most of all, poker rooms in big casinos are available to all the would-be hustlers out there.

The poker boom is part of the general explosion in legalized gambling in the last two decades. Poker has taken a little while to catch up, largely because it hasn't been aggressively marketed by the gaming industry until the last five years or so. Compared to hosting other casino games, running a poker room isn't very lucrative-most casinos don't even offer poker because they make more money filling the space with slot machines. But as organized gaming has looked for ways to bring in new players, many casinos have expanded their poker operations, sprucing up once moribund poker rooms, hosting big tournaments, and, together with others with a financial stake in the game's growth, putting forward a big marketing push-one that dangles the promise of huge scores before a wide-eyed public, created a pantheon of poker "superstars," and white-washed some of the game's more unsavory aspects.

It's not that tough of a sell. America has always mythologized the rough and tumble world of poker and its charmingly roguish denizens. Wild Bill Hickock and Augie March, Steve McQueen taking on Edward G. Robinson in The Cincinnati Kid and Matt Damon hustling a completely unrealistic New York underground scene in Rounders. Through rose-colored sunglasses, usually purchased along with a poker visor to achieve that smoldering, don't-mess-with-me look at the table, we see the poker hustler, like Saul Bellow's hero, as someone who will "go at things as I have taught myself, free-style" in order to "make the record in my own way."

And as someone with a fat roll of c-notes, of course.

Naturally, the reality is a lot different. You're much more likely to find yourself sitting next to some overweight slob cursing the heavens between bites of a sloppy burrito than a hardened hustler in a cowboy hat if you venture down to A.C. next weekend. But so what if the company leaves something to be desired. The money's good, right? Well, not for most-in all likelihood, fatty and most of his motley compatriots at the table are losing, as roughly 90 percent of poker players do in the long run.

While the other players are your primary opponents, everybody at the table is also engaged in a quiet struggle against the house (surprise, surprise). In your average live \$10-20 Hold'em game (ten dollar bets and raises on the first two betting rounds, twenty on the second two), the casino will take about a hundred bucks per hour off the table through raking pots or assessing a time charge to each player. The dealers make out pretty well too-it's customary to tip at least a dollar on each pot won. With an average of maybe thirty hands an hour in live play, that's another forty bucks or so leaving the table every sixty minutes. On aver-

much they want (usually with some minimum) and play until they want to leave, tournament poker involves entrants buying in for a fixed price at the beginning, receiving the same number of chips, and then playing until one winner has accumulated everything. Marketed as a low risk, high-reward structure, tournaments tend to get novice and experienced players alike salivating.

Here's an example of how it works. Two hundred players enter a tournament with a \$550 buy-in (fifty bucks for the house, the rest for the kitty). All but the last eighteen players standing will just end up \$550 poorer. But those eighteen will divide the spoils on a graduated scale, with the winner generally getting around 40 percent of the total prize pool. In this case, that would be \$40,000 ("forty dimes"), quite a payday for that lucky soul. Who could be you?

The tournaments themselves do usually make money for the casinos (the house's take in the above example would have been \$10,000, plus the side benefits of getting a couple hundred players into the casino). But the ultimate purpose of tournament poker is more promotional. By flashing that huge pot of gold

following years, the ranks of attending players swelled and Binion expanded the World Series to include different events with other poker games. This year there were thirty-six events, the last of which (still \$10,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em) drew 839 entrants.

As the number of players at the World Series has grown, so have the number of media puff pieces chronicling the event, the latest of which is Positively Fifth Street, a book by novelist and freelance journalist Jim McManus that recounts his parlaying of a \$4,000 dollar advance to write an article on the tournament for Harper's into a seat in the championship and an eventual fifth place finish that netted him \$240,000. McManus is an entertaining writer and the book is full of interesting anecdotes about the poker world. Unfortunately, like most of his journalistic colleagues, he has trouble seeing the big picture because his eyes are so focused on the bright lights and the huge money.

No Big League is complete without its all-stars, players for the public to idolize and dream of competing against. McManus' hero is T.J. Cloutier, one of the most successful players on the tournament circuit in the last fifteen years and author of a dubiously valuable book on No Limit Hold'em. He's a respected tournament superstar who fits the image to a tee-a big, gruff, chain smoking, former road gambler from Texas. McManus spends a good amount of time lionizing him with various inanities (more on this later). But Cloutier isn't the only colorful-and often colorfully named-poker stud that Positively Fifth Street and other poker books and magazines have given us. If the tough Texan thing doesn't do it for you, just turn a wide eye to Johnny "The Orient Express" Chan, Chris "Jesus" Ferguson, "Amarillo Slim" Preston, Men "The Master" Nguyen, Dave "Devilfish" Ulliott, Daniel "Kid Poker" Negreanu, Huckleberry Seed, Phil "The Brat" Hellmuth, Oklahoma Johnny Hale, Doyle "Texas Dolly" Brunson, Eskimo Clark, or Phil "The Tiger Woods of Poker" Ivey.

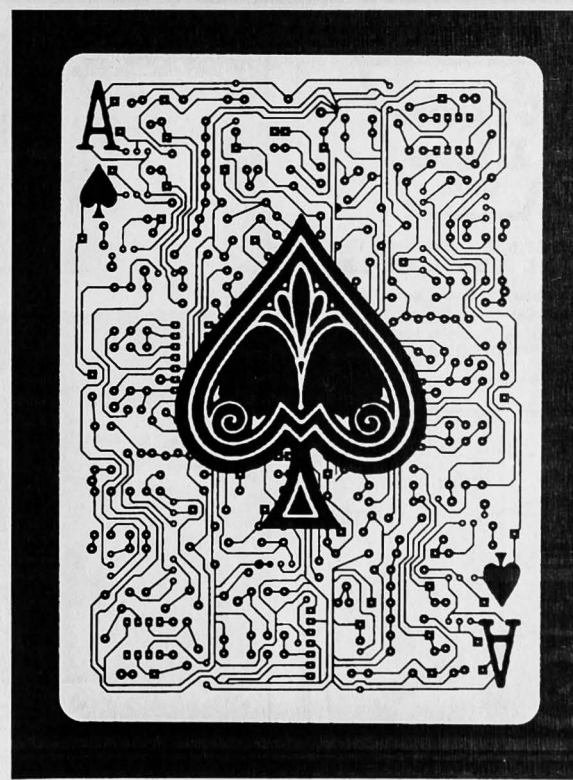
We're told that these guys, and maybe thirty or forty others on the tournament circuit, are the best of the best, capable of seeing through mere mortals at a glance, guys for whom winning the aforementioned forty dimes hardly counts as a score at all. In other words, if you find yourself fortunate enough to make a final table in this company, you better bring your brass balls or they'll run right over you. Especially in No-Limit Hold'em, the tournament game of choice that Brunson once dubbed "the Cadillac" of poker, in which there is no cap on any given bet and you can thus lose all your chips on a single hand.

So why do amateurs keep winning some of the biggest tournaments, and why are so many "superstars" broke?

The first answer is a lot simpler than the second: Lady Luck. One of the poker industry's biggest secrets is that high-stakes cash games actually require far more skill than the big tournaments, where the luck factor is incredibly high. The most recent World Series championship, and its \$2.5 million first prize, was won by an amateur from Tennessee with the apt name of Chris Moneymaker. He had exactly zero hours of live tournament experience under his belt before winning poker's premier showcase (he had played in many online tournaments, however). Last year's winner, Robert Varkonyi, was an unknown amateur as well.

Sure, the big names are generally a good deal better than the anonymous guys. Nobody is going to be betting on Moneymaker or Varkonyi next year. But the way tournaments are structured, with ever-increasing antes putting pressure on players to risk all their chips with only marginal advantages, makes it difficult to fully capitalize on that skill differential.

There are many more tournaments than the World Series during the year, and one would think that the cream of the tournament circuit would eventually rise to the top. In



age, each player at a full table-ten handed-will have to climb out of a fourteen dollar per hour hole. It's a task easier said than done for somebody without a fair amount of experience and self-discipline, and accomplishing it isn't exactly cause for celebration. You're just breaking even after all. While that's several orders of magnitude better than aspiring poker players would do in the pit playing blackjack or craps, I doubt those bombarding Amazon's servers are doing so with visions of merely not losing.

But Madison Avenue has nothing on the gaming industry when it comes to the selling of dreams. And lots of novice poker players, staying true to their piscine moniker, are taking the bait. To facilitate this, the collection of interests profiting from the boom in poker have pulled off a major marketing coup, convincing the public not only that small profits are easily won, but that big scores are within the grasp of the daring.

Other than the advent of online action, the most significant development in the poker world over the last ten years has been the rise of tournament play. Unlike standard cash games in which people buy in for however

at the end of the poker rainbow to all the dreamers out there, the gaming industry is attracting thousands of new players, inspiring them to go down to the casino and put in some hours learning how to play in the cash games in the hope of someday having a chance to play for the big bucks. This gets new players into the casino who may spend money elsewhere, increases the number of games which the house is raking, and appeases the better regular players, who might go elsewhere without a steady influx of suckers to make the games juicy.

Tournament play has been marketed as the Big Leagues of the game, which is only apt since the oldest and most prestigious of all the tournaments is the World Series of Poker, held each May since 1970 at the Horseshoe Casino, an aging joint in Las Vegas's Glitter Gulch. Vegas legend Benny Binion and a few of his hustler friends started the tournament as a promotional gimmick to draw poker players and press to his casino. They picked a relatively unknown game, Texas Hold'em, played it in a no-limit format with a \$10,000 buy-in, and received tons of fawning media coverage. In



## SPORT &amp; LEISURE

HOBBIES ARE FOR SISSIES

many cases, the famous known players do make out well—some of those guys mentioned above are pulling in steady yearly incomes in the low six figures with an occasional big score pushing them higher. But many of the famous tournament "superstars" are also constantly broke, and this is another big secret that the poker industry tries to sweep under the green felt.

"Many top names in tournament poker are not only flat broke, but they owe thousands (in some cases hundreds of thousands of dollars) to their backers," acknowledged Nolan Dalla, a longtime Vegas poker player and journalist, in a controversial February article for pokerpages.com that tried to steer aspiring players away from the dream of becoming touring pros. "At best, tournament poker is a break-even proposition. After paying expenses (travel, hotels, food, and so forth), it is clearly a negative proposition. Even if you think you're good, you will not outplay the best tournament pros. If former World Series of Poker winners are broke, what chance do you have?"

Many of these idolized superstars are clearly just not good enough to hack it in the rarefied company of the circuit. It's hard to be paying money to the house on top of travel expenses and still make a good living, especially against tough competition. This is why corporate sponsorship of tournament poker, which would offset the need for the casino to take a slice of the prize pool, is the Great White Whale of the poker industry these days.

There are also tournament professionals who may make a big score but still find themselves hard-up soon afterwards. These guys have "leaks." Usually used to refer to a hole in one's game, the term can also mean a hole in one's lifestyle: a fondness for horses, dice tables, or even pricey strip clubs. But another leak is the probably the most damaging of all to many tournament studs—poker, specifically the big money cash games that tend to be populated by the true hustlers, more anonymous guys who prefer it that way.

Success in tournaments is often a simple combination of luck and pedal-to-the-felt aggression—it's a world in which bullies thrive. But this style of play often breaks the tournament players in cash games—their opponents figure them out, let them win a few small pots, and then patiently wait for the right opportunities to hammer them. And at the stakes some of these guys are playing for, a huge headline-making tournament score can evaporate into the pockets of the cash players within the course of an evening.

"There is no comparison between the best money players and the best tournament players (except of course for those few who beat both)," David Sklansky, a widely respected poker theorist and writer and a medium-high stakes cash player himself, commented several years ago in a discussion of the topic on an Internet forum. In the same thread, "Kid Poker" Negreanu, one of the few players that seem to thrive in both worlds, added, "In a \$400-800 game, you can lose an entire bankroll, as much as \$80,000 on a brutal night... Tournament players really don't get punished the way they should for the marginal mistakes they make. While in a cash game, the marginal mistakes ALL count, and are the difference between being a losing player, and a winner."

McManus fawningly quotes Cloutier comparing the gap between the tournament circuit and your average home poker game to the difference between high school and college football. If that's true, then the high stakes cash games are the NFL of the poker world and the author's idol should know, since he doesn't fare very well in them by most accounts.

The aforementioned forty dimes is hardly a respectable bankroll for the larger cash games spread regularly at Las Vegas's Bellagio, the Bicycle, Commerce, and other clubs in Los Angeles, and wherever that week's big tournament happens to be (and why would these cash game players follow the tournaments around while rarely playing in them?). If you want to play \$50-100 Pot Limit Holdem or a \$500-1000 rotation game (in which a variety of limit games are alternated between), you better have a few more bullets than that.

You also better be an expert at games other than No Limit Holdem, which is far from the most skillful game around and rarely played for really high stakes. If they play Holdem at all, cash game players prefer to play it in its Pot Limit variation, in which trapping and trickery come into play much more. Regular Limit Holdem, the game of choice for most low limit guys like myself and perhaps the second most popular tournament game, is rarely played. The high-limit players tend to prefer games like Seven Card Stud High-Low and Triple Draw Lowball, in which a greater edge goes to the most skillful.

Games of \$200-400 Pot Limit or \$1,500-3,000 Limit are usually about as big as it gets, except for when a "whale"—a rich sucker who wants to piss with the big boys—comes into

## RULES OF HOLDEM

## THE SET UP

Holdem games usually have between seven and ten players, though only two are necessary. Instead of a standard ante structure in which everybody puts a small sum into the pot before the hand, Holdem employs a system in which two players make small forced bets—known as the big blind and small blind—in order to get money in the pot and start the betting action. The responsibility for making these bets rotates around the table.

## THE PLAY

Each player in Texas Holdem is dealt two cards face down or "in the hole." The player to the left of the big blind—the position known as "under the gun"—must decide whether to equal the amount of the big blind's forced bet by calling, double the big blind by raising, or concede the hand by folding. Each player makes this decision in turn until all bets have been called. The remaining players who have not folded then get to see the "flop"—the first three community cards that each can use in conjunction with their two own cards to make a hand. Players now have a chance to bet again. After bets have been called the remaining players see the fourth community card or "the turn," have another chance to bet, see the fifth and final community card or "the river," have a final chance to bet, and then reveal their hands to determine a winner. If every other player folds, the last player does not have to reveal his or her hand to take the pot, and experienced players usually exercise this option.

town, when all bets are off, or actually, just a whole lot higher. The most notable "whale" of the last couple years has been a Texas businessman named Andy Beal. Wanting to learn how to play poker, he decided to take lessons from the best. This year, a group of ultra high stakes cash players—including actual poker legends Brunson, Chip Reese, and Ted Forrest—pooled their bankrolls and took turns playing Beal heads up in \$30,000-\$60,000 Limit Holdem. After two weeks, Beal reportedly left Vegas town at least fifteen million dollars in the hole.

With so much money at stake in cash games, even at stakes like \$100-200 that "only" tend to have buy-ins of \$8,000 or so, being cheated is a concern for many players. The presence of cheats in the poker world is also a very contentious issue, one you're unlikely to read about from authors like McManus, who writes in reference to casino poker in general, not just tournaments—that "We don't even have to worry about cheating, since cameras and non-playing dealers have all but eliminated that peril."

Casinos are equipped with very advanced,

been bombarding recgambling/poker for over two years with anecdote after colorful and detailed anecdote concerning fairly widespread cheating in big cash games.

Georgiev claims that he and a group of associates cheated Los Angeles poker games for over thirty years, employing a dizzying assortment of scams to separate generations of suckers from their money—using verbal and hand signals to identify which cards they held, catching a sucker "in the middle" with a barrage of raises when one scammer held an unbeatable hand and the others held nothing, marking high cards with special inks that could only be identified by the trained eye, even wearing special glasses and contact lenses that would help pick up these markings. Most of these scams were allegedly conducted with the help of crooked casino employees, who, in exchange for a cut of the winnings, put marked decks into games, helped the scammers lock down seats at the same table together, and prevented other groups of cheats from playing. Georgiev makes no bones about the motive for

got to have the most fertile imagination in the history of cardsharps. You don't have to have much card sense to realize he isn't running a complete bluff.

It's very difficult to win honestly in the long run if you're being regularly cheated. So one would think that most professionals and winning players would have a fairly large incentive in cheating being rooted out and exposed. The problem is that negative press for the game spells trouble for the better players just as it does for the casinos—the games are only as good as the volume of tourists, novices, and plain old suckers sitting down in them and those people might be turned away by a cheating scandal, even if the low limit games they're interested in are themselves unlikely to be scammed. There exists a tacit agreement among many poker players that concerns about cheating should only be voiced privately and dealt with behind closed doors.

It's a precipitous moment for the poker community. The fish are swimming all over the place, making the games great for those with the skills to capitalize on the situation. The World Poker Tour's weekly program on the Travel Channel has been a huge success. The dream of corporate sponsorship of some tournaments may actually be in sight. Why ruin the moment?

Unfortunately, the growth of Internet poker is making cheating a lot easier, which may eventually force some players to rethink this stance. Colluding during a live game requires a subtle system of signals. If you and your buddies are playing online together, all you need is Instant Messenger or a private chat room. If, for instance, there were three of you at the same table, you'd tell each other your hands as soon as you got your cards. In some cases, this information would help determine how to play—you might fold a pair of sixes you'd otherwise play if your friend had a six in his hand, for instance, because your chances of making trips would be greatly decreased—and in other instances you could work together to build a pot with a barrage of raises. **None of you held a very strong hand. You'd be splitting the money afterwards anyway, so it doesn't matter if you "lose" a bunch on that hand to your friend with the monster hand.** The important thing is that you trapped a sucker in the middle for many more bets than he'd otherwise have had to pay if he was just up against your friend, not a team of raising conspirators.

One must always watch out for these type of plays to be a consistent winner at online poker. Unfortunately, it's not that easy to detect as long as the scammers are relatively good at disguising their collusion as standard play. You see a lot of weird moves in the games these days, and the great majority are just the hopeless stratagems of bad players pissing their money away. And even when you are pretty sure that a team has just worked you, there's not that much you can do about it other than note their handles and make sure never to play at the same table again. All the major sites pay lip service to the idea that they take collusion seriously and will investigate all complaints. But in reality the policing is cursory at best. The sites are engaged in a fierce battle for players and market share—none of them are going to publicly acknowledge that their games may not always be honest.

This could become a major roadblock to the further development of Internet poker. But gamblers aren't much for thinking about the future. And right now, the games are so good that whatever cheating goes on hardly matters for the better players. As long as the fish keep swimming, nobody who depends on poker as a source of income is going to launch an anti-cheating crusade. I've made much more money in the last six weeks than I ever did in a comparable period working nine to five. And I did a lot less actual work and took a lot less shit from people I don't like.

Ultimately, despite its occasional camaraderie, poker is a game for individualists. Sitting around a table with nine strangers gunning for your wallet tends to teach you to look out for yourself. And so when I'm down at the Taj stacking mountains of chips or smiling in satisfaction at the balance in my online poker account, I usually feel that it's no skin off my ass if other people are getting cheated or if the gaming industry is selling the public a series of artful lies and distortions. But when I'm not playing, not caught up in the suspenseful revealing of the river card, the gleeful avarice of stacking and counting my chips, or the "hooah" ballistics of raising Mr. Weak on a total bluff because I know he just can't stand the heat and will cede the pot to me, the alpha dog across the table, I tend to get a little queasy and querulous when considering the poker industry and my own participation in it. I'm not sure that I'll ever be able to reconcile this difference in my feelings at and away from the table. But that's all right, it's probably better this way.

Sam Handlin just moved to California.

## GLOSSARY

from GLOSSARY, Page 6

**HOLE**—One's down cards. Also, the **POCKET**.

**KICKER**—Generally, the highest unpaired card in your hand.

**LIMP**—To just call the **BIG BLIND** before the flop in **HOLDEM** or **OMAHA**.

**MAKE A MOVE**—To make a deceptive play, usually a bluff intended to trick an opponent into folding a better hand.

**MANIAC**—A poor, overly aggressive player who tends to bet and raise often even when holding bad hands.

**MECHANIC**—A scammer able to manipulate the deck and deal certain cards to certain opponents.

**MOTOWN**—A jack and five in the **HOLE**.

**MUCK**—To fold. As a noun, the pile of folded cards that accumulates by the dealer during a hand.

**NO LIMIT**—Betting structure in which players may bet or raise as many chips as they have in front of them at any time.

**NUTS**—The highest hand possible in a given situation, usually employed with the definite article as "the nuts."

**OUTS**—Possible cards that could come to give a player a winning hand.

**PAPER**—Marked cards.

**POT LIMIT**—Betting structure in which players may bet or raise any amount up to the size of the pot.

**PRESTO**—A pair of fives in the **HOLE**.

**RAG**—A small card that doesn't appear threatening.

**RAILBIRD**—A hanger-on watching the game, most prevalent during tournaments.

**RAKE**—Amount taken from each pot by the house. Also, **VIGORISH**, **VIG**, or **JUICE**.

**RAMMING AND JAMMING**—Aggressive raising, with both draws and made hands, to build a pot.

**RIVER**—The fifth and last community card in **OMAHA** or **HOLDEM**. Also, **FIFTH STREET**.

**ROCK**—A conservative player who rarely enters a pot without a strong hand.

**ROLLED UP**—Starting with 23 of a kind in 7 Card Stud.

**RUNNING BAD**—In the middle of a losing streak.

**SANDBAG**—To feign weakness with a very strong hand in the hope of inducing an opponent to put more money into the pot. Also, **SLOW PLAY**.

**SCORE**—A large win in a tournament or cash game.

**SHIP IT**—Phrase commonly uttered after winning a pot.

**SIEGFRIED AND ROY**—A pair of queens. Also, **FOUR TITS**.

**SMALL BLIND**—The smaller of two rotating forced bets before the hand begins that spur the action in **HOLDEM**, **OMAHA**, and a few other games.

**STEAM**—To play recklessly because of anger, usually induced by a **BAD BEAT**.

**STEEL WHEEL**—A straight **FLUSH** from ace to five.

**SUCK OUT**—To complete a draw against improbable odds and beat a better starting hand, usually on the last card.

**TELL**—A behavioral tic **UNCONSCIOUSLY** displayed when holding a hand of a certain strength that **SAVVY** opponents can pick up on.

**THROWING THE PARTY**—Playing **BADLY** and **LOSING**.

**TILT**—An extreme form of steaming, in which frustration causes a player to make a series of **TERRIBLE** decisions.

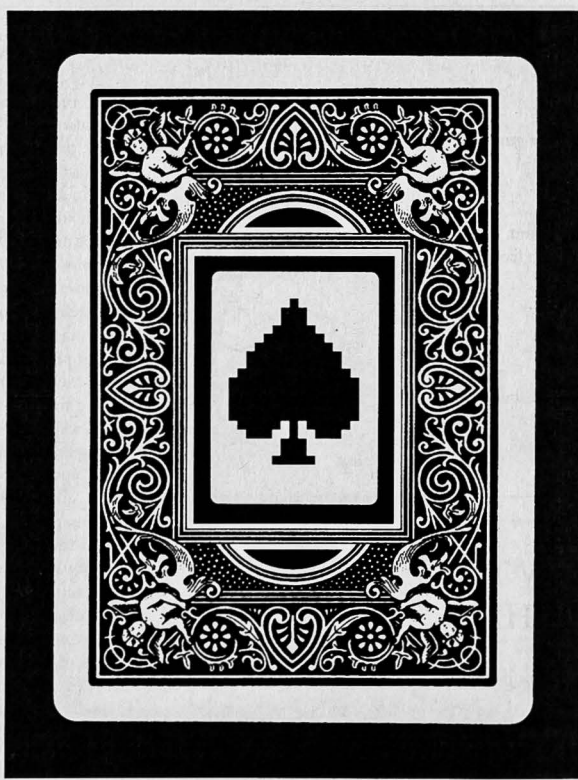
**TURN**—The fourth community card in **OMAHA** or **HOLDEM**. Also, **FOURTH STREET**.

**UNDER THE GUN**—The position first to act before the **FLOP**, immediately to the left of the **BIG BLIND**.

**UP AND DOWN**—A straight draw in which the player has four consecutive cards and thus can make a straight in two different ways. Also, **OPEN-ENDED**.

**WHEEL**—A straight from ace to five. Also, a **BICYCLE**.

**WHITEFLASH**—An ink for marking cards that is generally detectable only when the cards are moving.



almost Orwellian, surveillance systems. But the fancy gadgetry is largely there to protect the house, not the customers, against cheats and crooked employees. Unteamed cameras, some linked to face-recognition programs designed to identify known scammers, might be trained on every blackjack table. But that doesn't mean there is good surveillance in the poker room, where cheating doesn't affect the house take. The only way for cheating in poker to become a danger to the gaming industry is if it leads to bad publicity and lower subsequent turnout.

So when Joe Novice goes to his local card room and leafs through Cardplayer—the Pravdaesque industry rag freely distributed in most casinos—he'll never read anything about cheating. There won't be a mention of pro Pat Fleming's getting banned recently from The Orleans in Las Vegas for scamming or of Nguyen's tournament "cheating pack," a group of Vietnamese players from Los Angeles who many have accused of cheating in tournaments in a variety of ways. And there certainly won't be a mention of Russ Georgiev, a veteran high-limit player and confessed cheater who has

his apostasy: revenge for being shut out of this deal. He claims that as new casinos' opened in L.A. in the last fifteen years and management changed, other packs of cheaters moved in on his turf and took possession of the big cash games. Moving to Vegas was not an option—those games were allegedly controlled by a different group of cheats, one that Georgiev says includes Brunson, Reese, Forrest, and many other poker legends.

Georgiev is an egomaniac with a big time martyr complex. He has no hard proof and is prone to playing fast and loose with the truth when it suits his interests. But he's also a true insider who has known everyone who's anyone in the poker world over the years. And the volume and detail of his accusations and anecdotes is pretty astounding. If he's making it all up to slander enemies and settle scores—as many people in the industry have claimed—he's

<sup>1</sup> In California, gambling is legal so long as the house does not have an interest in the wager, which means no blackjack, craps, or roulette. But poker, California blackjack, and Pai-Gow are offered.



# Art & Letters

A MONSTER BORN IN A SMALL ROOM

## FRESHMAN PHYSICS XII.ii

catch one fan blade with each opening of eyes might begin to believe could make the whole thing stop

turning just by blinking

motion is relative and relative to me prone couch the fan the dirt the solar plexus might.

he's looking for meaning in all he's accomplished to this point i can tell him only it has something to do with relative motion, electro-magnetic attraction and repulsion

a sly simple distraction on my part significant enough to slide in a proposal of marriage a denser matter harder to breathe in and out

— SHELLEY HICKLIN

## HAND-WOUND

AN EXCERPT FROM THE FORTHCOMING NOVEL

BY BRYAN CHRISTY

Blocker he come in the shop one day. He's wearing a big orange chink jacket buttons up the front like Charlie Chan and a little bolo hat on his head. He's a big orange school bus. His shoes is puddles of brown shine and there's a parrot on his shoulder. One of them all white parrots. No lie.

I'm wiping off the jewelry case. Blocker waves a handful a little white papers at me. "Bobby," he says, "what do you see here?"

I says, "I see a nigger don't know the circus is left town."

He throws the papers on the counter. "Cracker," he says. "You don't know the value a color."

Blocker spreads the little rectangles a paper out in front of me. He says, "See, god started the world with a white canvas and then he put life onto it. That's how come we niggers sing and dance so good and your people do their dancing in squares. Now, I ask you again," he says, "What do you SEE here?"

"I see white dollar bills," I say.

"You getting closer," he says. "But you always was low minded so I'm gonna tell you. You see dollar bills all right. But these is hunner dollar bills."

You'll never believe what that sonofabitch come up with. He took a whole box of one-dollar bills and bleached them white. He had some West Philly spic was gonna paint them

papers to look like hundreds. See in them days it wasn't the ink the banks looked at, it was the paper. They had these counting machines that tested bills for the starch. Linen and cotton has starch. Regular wood paper don't have no starch.

You watch, even when his bill is good your average degenerate paperhanger rubs his money on his pants before he turns it over. It's a habit he gets into from the old days putting some cotton on the bad paper.

And even when the starch was good you wasn't done. You couldn't pass no library card. On top of the starch you had to have that linen feel. Plus you had to have them little red and blue fibers painted on. Once you got all that together, and a decent guy for the artwork, you had a live bill.

That's a lot for a guy to think about, which is why smart guys stay away from paper. Blocker, he liked horses, so he come up with a way around all that.

In the horse racing business there's guys that have to know what the horse ate that morning, who his parents was, what his ass temperature is, does he like the sun, is there mud on the course. Your seasoned gambler knows the shortcut through that bullshit is the jockey. A good jockey finds all that out about ass temperature and oats before he signs on to a horse, so then you don't got to worry about

nothing on race day except maybe what the jockey ate for breakfast—and who paid for it.

Well, the jockey in the counterfeiting business is the U.S. Government. They're the ones who know how to make the paper right. Blocker didn't worry about the little red and blue fibers or the starch or the linen feel. He left that up to the best dollar bill-making expert in the world—the U.S. Treasury Department. He let the Government make the paper. Blocker, he just took the color out of it.

He slid me a dolled up hundred. I had to say it was good. That hundred was perfect. But I just shook my head at him. I said, "Well that's a good trick and I admit it'll work. But how many nigger's you know can pass a hunner dollar bill? First one steps up to the counter at Woolworth's is going to the can. And that's if the bill's good. If it's counterfeit that nigger's a dead man."

Blocker he's looking at me like I'm a cream filled éclair he's gonna eat. He says, "Not if that nigger is a white man."

Well, to make a deal like this work you needed a guy who was dealing in big money. I'm talking five hundred grand transactions and bigger. When the bank machines is counting that much, you throw in thirty or forty G's in bleached bills and you got something worth the time.

Back then I didn't know no high rollers like that so I put it out that I had my hands on a coin I needed to get rid of quick. This coin I chose was the 1933 Double Eagle twenty dollar gold piece. There's certain guys, like the Rockefellers or maybe the Duponts—I'm not saying the Rockefellers or the Duponts, but guys in that class who collect coins. And how they collect them coins is like a junkie collecting heroin. The 1933 Double Eagle with the walking liberty is crack cocaine in the coin collecting business. Why? It was illegal. Roosevelt killed the gold standard in '34 so right away the 1933 was illegal to hold. If you had one you was an outlaw but you was also in a very exclusive club. Those what knew, knew the 33. They also knew a few of them got stoled out of the Philly mint and fenced off of Sansom Street.

I was working on Sansom Street and I let it out how I had one to sell. Boom. I got somebody wants to see it. Now I ain't never seen that coin in my adult life but that don't matter. I got a very respectable citizen and that's what I needed to move hundred dollar notes.

When I told Blocker who I put it to, he said no way was a guy like him gonna go for it. But I had no doubts about that. The gypsies got a saying, "Nobody ever has enough money." And nobody does.

So that first batch of albino bills is laying out there on my counter like flounder fillets. One minute them papers is nothing but scraps, next minute they're a trip to Vegas, they're some prime rib dinners for Kate. Maybe a ballgame with my son. Whatever it was I was thinking when I got up in the morning I don't know. But I went to bed that night knowing one thing for stone sure: them papers I had to do.

Well, we got pinched. They put Block against me and me against Block. This was a federal offense—counterfeiting—so they was buzzing real good.

Feds give me a deal if I was to rat on Block. I knew they was doing the same thing for him. I tried not to think about Kate or my son. I tried not to think about Block being no shine neither but I couldn't help it.

Look at them shines you wanna know what's wrong with this country. Look at them fishing on the Schuylkill River. Fishing! In that filth and every single one of them is wearing a tag. We make them poor niggers pay to take them stinking fish that you wouldn't feed to your cat. We make them pay to take three fish a week outa that cesspool. And you know why it's a cesspool? Because them big guys up stream dump so much sludge and waste and biohazard material. But that's too big to see. It's too big. That's what you gotta see, kid. That's what protects them.

They make that river so not only you can't drink from it, not only you can't swim in it, but

if your dog would fall in you gotta take him to the vet. If you fall in you burn your clothes. And if ten fish is strong enough to live in that filth long enough to make a meal we make a poor nigger pay to catch them. That's what I mean by the underdog. You ever seen a bigger underdog in this country than a nigger with no license fishing on the Schuylkill River? Now you tell me what's right. I ain't gonna say no more, kid. Turn that thing off.

Maybe you think I owed Blocker on account of Blocker kept me from blowing my brains out that time. Maybe you think it should of mattered Blocker saved my little brother from drowning when we was kids but that don't count neither. See in the first case, shines don't go in for suicide. No matter how bad it gets, it'll get better. If it's money, their number'll hit tomorrow. If it's something else, it won't be so bad in the morning. Since I was a kid I never heard of one nigger killed himself. And I knowed a lot a black guys in trouble. Ever hear of a shine killed himself? Doesn't happen. It's white guys can't take it.

In the second case with my brother drowning that was just a good deed, like when a billionaire gives some hospital a million dollars. That's a good deed too but it don't mean he's no good person. Chances are that man want no good to somebody to get that billion dollars which is why he's donating his crumbs to sick kids. Blocker was just a kid when he jumped in to save my brother Tommy, which was like being a billionaire only with make believe and adventures, so one little one in a boat want nothing.

No. None of that mattered to me. What I was thinking when them feds grabbed me and Blocker was, How was my wife Kate gonna live with the shame of me being in the can? What would she live off? My son Kevin was going bad, but me being away want gonna help. Even ratting on Blocker want being no rat to most of the guys I dealt with on account of him being a mullion. Plus, Blocker was getting the same deal put to him. If he

### KIME AGINE



## BROOKLYN

Her nipples  
Like bits of chewed bubble gum  
Waiting  
To be back in my mouth

These women of Green Point  
With their flat, pink Polish faces

Their skin looks cold  
But the blood pumps hard  
In their pouty lips

Like two drops of blood in the snow

— SHAWN DOHERTY

## I LOVE HOW THESE HOUSES HAVE PORCHES

when a head rounds a corner it may be distressed  
and not know it  
or turn gooey with untangle your hair  
the way swinging out over a screened-in  
or hanging back

becomes a quiet disco the day before new year,  
an intentional joke  
played out on the two of them—  
one short and one bald

strangers  
prepared to walk down that small town street yet  
none too pleased about it,  
either

hair is a memory  
a frond is a friend  
dogs make waves to let the listening in

while it doesn't take long in a dusty Hollywood movie like *The Others*  
to wonder why Kidman doesn't just leave the mansion instead of  
relentlessly questioning the ghost-like maid?  
or why does she blame the children for her own errors in  
judgment?  
or am I really just naïve and if so is this the sort of naïveté I'm  
prepared to live with?

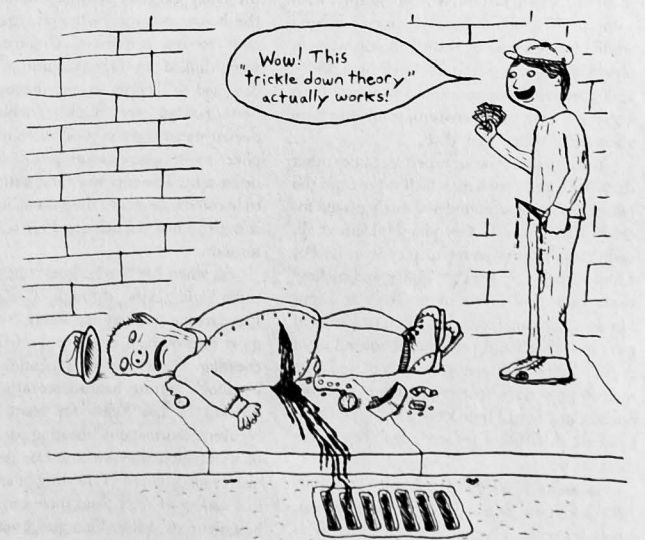
dreams are not *Songs in Red and Grey*  
they are plastic bags big enough to fit newspapers inside

— ETHEL RACKIN

## HOW TO GET THE GIRL

Before the unbearable love,  
you must see her as she wants to be seen.  
Before the conversation made almost entirely of silence,  
you must compare her to something blue.  
She should see you for what you are.  
You should take care not to be too ugly.  
Do not urinate in public or giggle ferociously.  
It is important to feel like an apple ever so often.  
But never make a promise of a poem you won't keep.  
Don't tell her you like the color of brain.  
Never say: "I've only come here looking for rutabaga."  
Do not pretend to know her hair.  
Learn the best time to say I love you.  
A good time is when she's crossing the street  
with a sandwich and her shoes fall off, stopping traffic.  
If you play guitar, stop. Unless your the best.  
If not, pour red wine into the belly of your guitar.  
Learn how to say I love you in at least ten different languages.  
For example, the Creoles say: Mi aime jou!  
In Swahili they say: Nakupenda!  
In Mandarin: Wo ay ni!  
Learn to make chocolate from scratch.  
Draw her small portraits which you can title:  
"Everytime I smell you,  
I think of nothing but a field of peppermint!"  
Or: "Who said the kazoo would not play in my chest today?"  
If you lack the courage remember:  
There are times in everyone's life when they need to be naked.

— SETH POLLINS



ANDREW JEFFREY WRIGHT



# Art & Letters

NUBS OF YELLOW BEAK CRACK THE SILENT WHITE SHELL

gave me up and I stuck to the story, I was down two times. You didn't have to be no Jew to know how that added up.

Them dirty Secret Service and FBI bastards was telling me did I really wanna go to the can for a nigger. They didn't have to ask me that. I didn't want to go to the can for nobody.

This is a case where my jewelry training came in handy. Before you go in for something you got to know what it's worth. Only one way to tell what a piece of jewelry is worth—I don't care if it's some broad's charm bracelet, a diamond covered Rolex, or King Farouk's coin collection—put it on the scale and see what the gold weighs. Then you know.

When it comes to jewelry I'm a sucker for the product so I got burned many times. But when it comes to people, I don't mess with that. I put them on the scale. And what you weigh them against is a question: Would he help you if it cost him something more than he could afford?

So, here's what I thought about when them FBI dogs was telling me did I really wanna lose my family for some West Philly jig.

I'm driving Blocker's car down Atlantic City. We got a guy down there we're gonna meet. I got Block in the passenger seat. Ratman in the back. There's who knows how many guns stuffed in Blocker's trunk, under the seat, in the door. Traffic's all backed up and the car's been running hot all summer. It's a million degrees. I'm watching my temperature gauge going. All around us is beach people. Station wagons. Kids with beach balls. Saltwater taffy. Kites. Dogs.

Block never went nowhere's without his guns. You think it was because of West Philadelphia but it wasn't. Block used to drive for Mike Roscoe from the Roofers. He'd drive Big Mike up to New York, up Scranton-Wilkes Barre, Boston, Chicago, Detroit. Wherever it was the unions was having their meeting.

"Bobby," Blocker says, "when I go in them union meetings them potato head micks see five niggers they wisht they'd killt. Five niggers robbed 'em, stole their radio, busted into

their house. Something. Everyone of em's got a I-Been-Wronged-by-a-Nigger story and I'm their happy ending. I'm a big man. I stand out in them cracker meetings. So I do two things. Number one, I stay stuck to Big Mike. Number two, I ask as many of them mick greaseballs as I can, Who wants to check out the latest addition to my gun collection? I show 'em all the guns I can."

So I'm driving Blocker's car down the AC Expressway and I see from the gauge she's gonna boil over. I look for a place to pull off. There's a cut in the median with some trees so I gun the car into it. We don't get fifty feet there's a cop on us. Ratman is all fidgity in the back. Block tells Ratman don't say nothing about no guns. The cop takes my license and comes back. He looks at me for a solid minute. He's staring at me like he knows me. I don't look at him. Them Jersey troopers is notorious. This is back in the Jersey Justice days when they worked you over just because, and I got a shine next to me too big to be good and a goofy one-legged nigger named Ratman in the back.

The cop looks in the window at me and says, "Cover your eyes."

I look around. We're in this gully where nobody can see us. Block is next to me breathing like he was drowning. The AC is off on account of the engine. The cop says it again, "Cover your eyes." I seen his hand is moving towards his gun. I don't look at him but I say it pretty clear. I say, "Get the fuck outa here."

Block is sweating. He's gonna die if we don't get some wind on him. I don't know what this cops gonna do. I think maybe he's gonna shoot us right there. For why I don't know but that's what I thought and once a thought like that gets in your brain and its boiling hot and your somewhere no one can see you and your friends is suffocating and the guy is reaching for his gun right next to your ear you can't get rid of a thought like that. So Block pushes back in his seat. He starts snorting like a bull, twisting this way and that, doing something I can't see. Even without looking I know what he's reaching for.

I stare straight ahead to keep the cop's eyes off of Block. I think whether I should step on

the gas but the motor's off and I won't have no time to get it started. That's when Block reaches his big arm across my chest and sticks his hand out the window at the cop. The cop looks down. There's two hundred dollar bills in Blocker's hand. This is back then. Two hundred is a lot a money, and this was real money. The second that cop touches them bills Block reaches with his other hand and lays a gun on the dashboard with his finger on the trigger.

Blocker says, "We're leaving now officer. Bobby start the car."

I start the car and hit it. I'm shaking because now I'm sure that cop was gonna pop us. I say, "Can you believe that cop told me to cover my eyes. What is this the Wild fucking West?" I can see Block is looking at me. He's studying me just like that cop did. I turn to him. Block's eyes are big, his face is soaking wet. He's sounds like he's breathing through a paper bag. He puts his gun back under the seat. Then he says, "Bobby, you country nigger. That cop didn't ask you to cover your eyes. That cop said, What COLOR are your eyes!"

We laughed all the way back to Philly. "You shoulda tole him maroon!" Blocker yelled, which is what they used to write down in the can if you was a nigger. "Yessir officer," Blocker stuck his thumb in his chest, "maroon eyes and wooly hair just like this here nigger!"

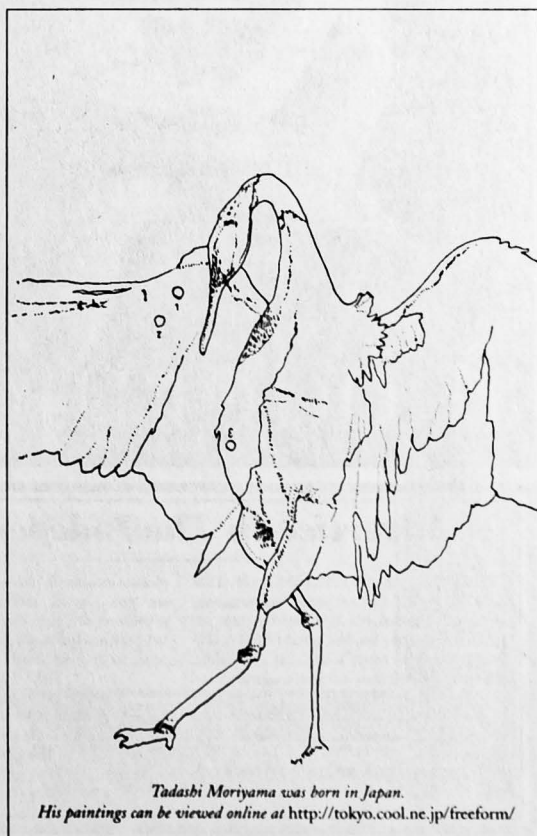
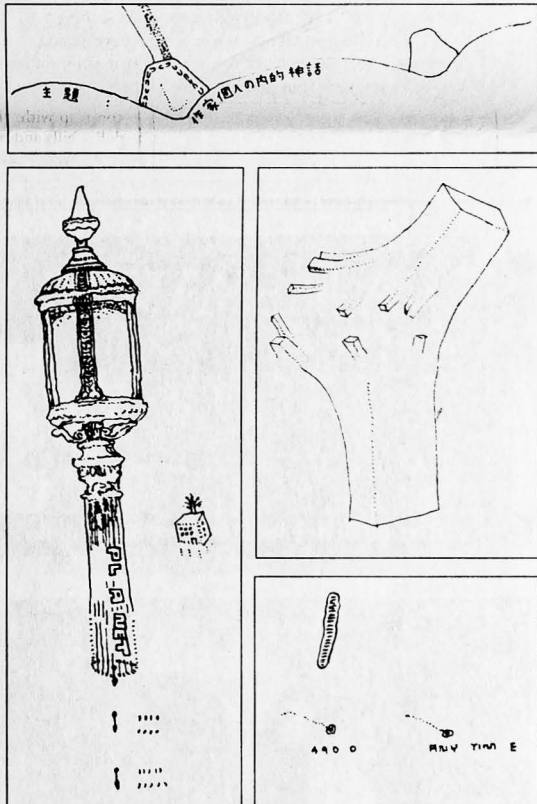
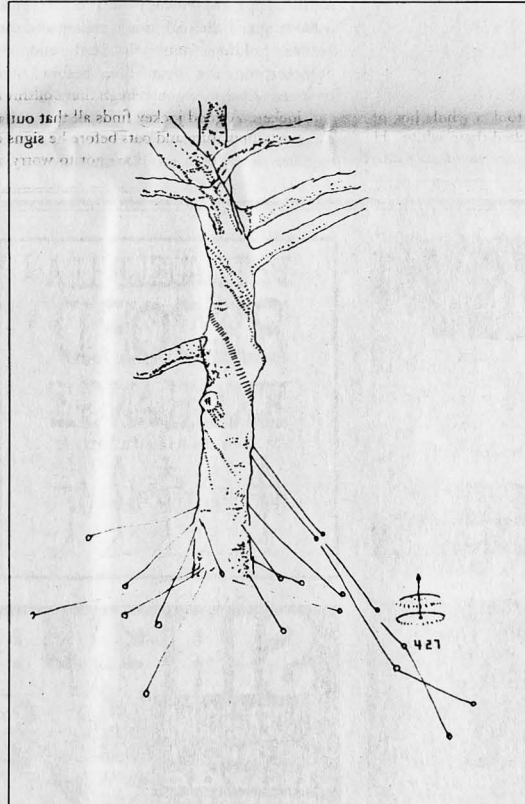
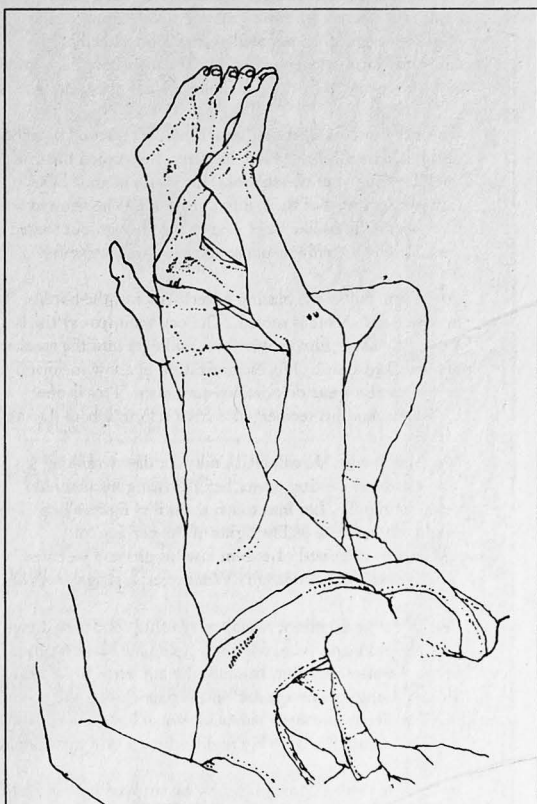
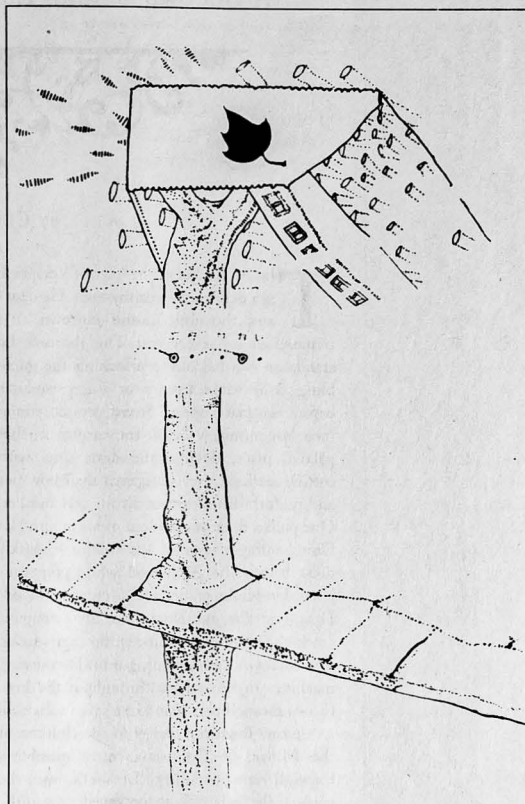
You think I was best friends with J. Edgar Hoover or the President of General Motors he would of sat there with that cop like that for me? You think any of them creep bastards over K&A, any of them judges or cops or husbands so-happy-you're-giving-them-a-deal-on-their-wife's-anniversary-ring-they-want-you-over-for-dinner, you think any of them would of done that?

My own son I don't even know about but Blocker was ready to die on account of I didn't want to tell a cop what color eyes I got. Show me one white man would do that. A friend like that they don't make. I couldn't rat on Theocitus T. Block even if he was a shine. We went to trial.

Bryan Christy is a freelance writer living in Philadelphia.

## SKETCHBOOK

BY TADASHI MORIYAMA



Tadashi Moriyama was born in Japan. His paintings can be viewed online at <http://tokyo.cool.ne.jp/freedom/>



end.





A FLIMSY HAT FOR A RAINY WORLD.

## COLD SWEAT

The boy who loves the world so much he wants to wait around and watch it end sees his fathers in the clumsy mouths of women who work among street-lamps, in skirts of pollen, eager to be replaced at their posts, like his fabricated former lovers, all of whose names have been loved and spray-painted by the boy under bridges after taking a huff

of fumes from his shirt or after a sunset transaction detailed his unlikelihood. Lord God, he prays, I've copied the frozen satellites from your sketchbooks, the swabs of your DNA from where you shot them into our rivers? Who showed you how to grow in us like this? You snake through our shared dream highway, built-in-praise-of that power we've felt

not in you, but in the blazing advertisements, the bottles in which our shame is served. The boy wants to say the last words of a silent film century over and over into the speakers of a wrecked Buick. His memorization of a few sorrowful phrases, a few spare detonations continues. This is now his work. And his reemergence from reform school doesn't

cool him down. He still feels guilty for disassembling his own cloud-causing power before kissing his first halo around a nipple. Let him touch the utility lights along machinery row, the yellow lights of the parking lot where he was created. Let him lose his girl and be hated, in the middle of a fandango. What celestial singer does he

hear in the penitentiary, where every other condemned man is doing push-ups, preparing to re-ignite his battle against life in the afterlife? But, stupidly, the boy turns his afterlife around, using spoons against hard surfaces, using the prison's wires to electrocute away his memories of baseballs and space monsters. And the boy's big night is on a world that should

never have worked, especially after he stripped it of its history, of its favorite crimes, just to have something to read on his way out. Listen, boy, we see your feet kicking and not touching anything. You're bringing everything we've done to a close. Can't you see that we're your fathers? How can you look at us and not come along?

— DAN LABEAU

fiction

## TETRANOM

A SECOND SERIAL EXCERPT FROM THE NOVEL



BY CLARK ROTH

The Archangel of the City of Veraporte is a deliriously wealthy man. He operates the dime casino in town at a tremendous loss every year. This morning he stands on the balcony overlooking the gambling floor some twenty or thirty minutes before the place opens. Smart-dressed young men last-minute-vacuum the carpets in that palatial place, dusting the dime slots with ostrich feathers, they straighten their bow ties and perform little card tricks for one another. One pulls a deck of cards out of his mouth like Chinese dragon smoke. A woman in a sparkly dress brings the Archangel white grapefruit juice. He winks at her like a crescent moon. Down on the gambling floor the croupiers crack their knuckles and shuffle their decks. The sound of dimes pouring into the counting machines makes echoes throughout the high roccoco room, dimes roar like a metal waterfall.

Across town the nanny to the children of the Mayor of Countenance is stumbling through sand, trailing 'Lixabeth and the triplets, the kids race at top speed toward the town's crappy amusement park. The sea breeze is blowing and the high tide is rolling and the kids're holding onto the tail end of Summertime for dear life, before that untamed, elusive season retreats into its cave and hides away for so long. Unknown to the children this is the last Saturday they'll spend together. For the nanny Doritz, anyhow, it

couldn't come soon enough. The sand shifts under her so she nearly breaks her ankle. Now she's bent over cussing and shaking fists at the kids, but they're too far away to hear words. The second son Two snickers a little and leads the others up over a sandy ridge, through the reeds and weeds, up to the main entrance of the park.

In the years since we met them, these three babies have turned into three blond boys, age 12, with the slightest hint of hair on their upper lips, the best sneakers money can buy, smooth hands. Their sister 'Lixabeth is the same grabby princess at 16, pursued by a small army of over-scented high school boys. At the first step into the park she applies glittery lip gloss and checks her reflection in the ticket window.

Two and the slightly older One run up to the counter and jockey for place. They play basketball in the school club and race on bicycles, they compare dicks. One's a little brighter, Two's better-looking. Three's just a sorry sight, strange and fragile like a baby pterodactyl, bookish but not smart, you know. Fortunately Two loves a good fight, he loves it when kids tease Three so he can attack them with rapid-fire fists that bleed until he sucks'm, never mind his own ill-ease about the boy.

So the kids blow most of their spending money on tickets to ride, they head off for the roller coaster, the heavy-metal tornado, the

spinning rockets, also the one that looks like a church choir loft that locks you in and rises up and spins around with everyone screaming in 5-part gospel harmony. At one point a piece of 'Lixabeth's retainer gets stuck in her throat and her eyes bug out, but then another hearty jerk from the 'Ramblin' Skunkfucker' and the piece gets dislodged and falls back into place.

So don't say fun can't save your life.

Late in the afternoon the kids stop to split a funnel cake, they notice Doritz has been missing since morning.

~So where the fuckety-fuck you think the old cow ended up?, manic young Two says.

~You know she's off somewhere getting trashed, 'Lixabeth says.

She tosses her hair in that snide, pretty way. Two throws a piece of funnel cake at One.

~You wanna make out with her, Two says.

One punches Two in the arm. Meanwhile 'Lixabeth has turned to bat her lashes at a trio of tough-looking Veraporte boys walking by the carnival booths. They stop/look at her, they shield their eyes from the sun. Two calls out to them.

~Don't do it, she's got pussy warts, Two says.

~She's a call girl, her brother One says.

'Lixabeth comes apart like an overripe orange, her face goes white, her eyes go deep and black like the inescapable grave. I guess we'll all go there someday. The three older boys walk on, chuckling. 'Lixabeth meanwhile jumps at her brothers both at once, she claws and beats them around the face. They laugh/duck her. She chases them down the main-way and right outta the park, leaving the third son, Three, sitting absently at the picnic table, blinking.

Three eats the rest of the abandoned funnel cake slowly, iguana-wise, until he's stuffed and light-headed. The greasy paper plate blows away. Three wanders around the prize booths near the front gate, all of 'm strung with bears and puppies and dinosaurs. Kids crowd around the rifles and bushel baskets and water pools, throwing, shooting, smacking the backs of each other's heads. Three sees an older boy award his best girl with some big purple plush

thing and notes her rapturous smile.

~Huh, Three says.

Down a side alley by some trash barrels, at the back end of a pizza/pretzel stand there's another booth, done up Egyptian, with plastic palm fronds all around, pyramids in the background, plush camels hanging from the walls: bushy brows, marble eyes, felt buck teeth. The man behind the counter is dressed like a sheik, with the white robe and headdress. Sheik's got a salt-and-pepper moustache that hangs over his mouth partway, and a hollow, pock-marked face. Even though Three is alone with the sheik, sheik still speaks to him through the crappy microphone.

~Step right up, kid, play Jacob and the Angel, sheik says.

~Win yourself a world-class camel, pock-marked sheik says.

Three goes hesitant and shy. He digs hands in pockets.

~Uh, how much?, Three says.

~Just a dollar, it'll cost you one dollar to play, pock-marked sheik says.

Three pulls out and picks through the change he's got left. He's got a dollar eighteen.

~I've only got a dollar, Three says.

~Yeah?, well what the hell else're you gonna do with it?, pock-marked sheik says.

Three concedes. He carefully pours a dollar in change into the sheik's hands and sits down on the stool. He wrings his hands, trying to crack his knuckles. He looks over the barren desert stage. There's a track, like for a model train, that connects two tunnels on either side of the platform. Sheik swings a control panel around and locks it in place. Panel features a crappy joystick and a well-worn red button.

~The stick's for up and down and back and forth, sheik says.

~Red button's for punching, pock-marked sheik says.

Sheik sits, gets his own control panel off a shelf and throws some switch in the booth wall. A boxing bell sounds and a motor starts up somewhere under the platform. Two puppets, one an angel, the other presumably Jacob, come rolling out of the train tunnels on the lit-

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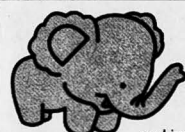
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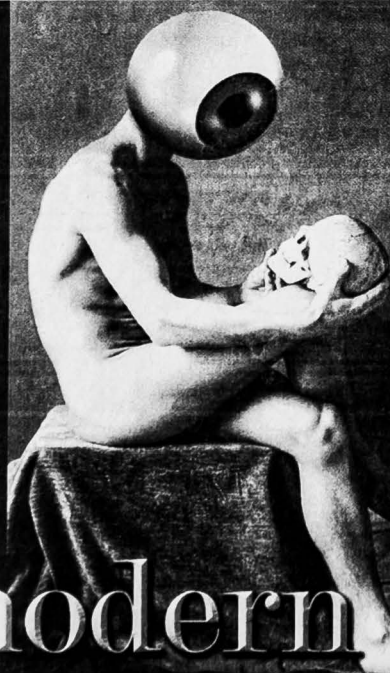
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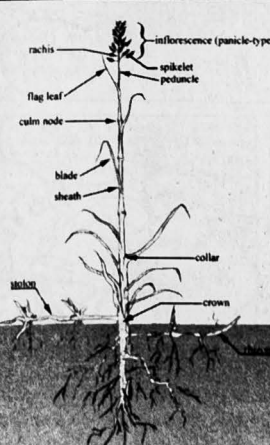
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The Women's Writing & Spoken Word Series is for women who practice and/or appreciate the craft of writing. Readings feature accomplished and burgeoning writers of varied genres.

## Tuesday August 12, 7-9PM - Poetry

The Eternal Now Reading Series presents  
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## Tuesday August 19, 7PM- Poetry

The Eternal Now Reading Series presents  
Sandra Turner-Barnes & Demetrius Ford  
South Jersey/Philadelphia area artist, Sandra Turner-Barnes, a national award winning poet, author & vocalist, will read selections of her work along with West Philadelphia area poet Demetrius Ford.

## Thursday August 21, 7PM

The Eternal Now Reading Series presents  
Daniel R. Collins & Glen R. Ahart co-founders of The Founders of Compassionately Stoneground Books.

## Monday August 25, 7:30-9PM- Readings

The Women's Writing & Spoken Word Series presents  
Taina Del Valle & Brown Rice  
hosted by Cassandre Xavier, Co-ed open reading to follow.

## Tuesday August 26, 7PM - Poetry

The Eternal Now Reading Series presents  
Susan Windle



# Art & Letters

PRYING OPEN THE LITTLE BLACK BOOKS

tle toy train track. Both of them wear miniature red boxing gloves along with Old Testament robes, white and dirty brown, respectively. The puppets wheel forward, they turn to face one another. They meet in the center of the platform, trailing electric wires under the hem of their cloaks. The angel is a clear favorite, being a head or so taller than Jacob and having the deft pock-marked sheik at the controls. Angel deals out several stealthy blows before Three's even figured out what the hell is going on.

Three fumbles with the joystick, panicking, he jerks it up and down, which makes his Jacob stand and squat, spastic-colon-wise. The angel puppet lands a punch square on Jacob's jaw. So then Three remembers the red button and starts pounding on it, Jacob's mits connect with the soft part of the angel a few times. Jacob hunches down and punches the angel in the crotch. Sheik maneuvers the angel back, he dodges, retreats, then advances with a blistering series of jackrabbit blows. The last one tips Jacob right off the platform, so he goes swinging out and hits the front of the platform with an ugly cracking sound.

-No fair, Three says quietly.

-It's a tough game to win, pock-marked sheik says.

Three looks regretfully at all the plush buck-toothed camels. They look down on him with a certain remote sympathy. An embarrassing lump goes up in his throat.

-You play pretty good though, pock-marked sheik says.

Three hopes the sheik will give him a camel for consolation. Instead the man finds a pocket in his long flow-y robe and comes up with a silver medallion, about the size of a 50-cent piece, with a handsome angel in relief on the front; on the back an inscription, PRAY FOR US. Pock-marked sheik takes Three's hand and puts the medallion in it.

Three soon sees the others far down the beach, they're carrying their shoes and socks, wading in the out-going tide. He takes his own off, holding shoes and socks in one hand, little angel medallion tightly in the other. He runs over there. When he joins up with the

others they search his face, Two almost makes a wise-crack but thinks better of it. They all stand still and quiet and watch the sun start to go. It isn't long before the shape of Doritz appears in the distance with one of the amusement park attendants.

-Aw shit, here it comes, Two says.

Doritz comes over the sand with a rotten face, big finger in the air, she shakes and belows at the four of them. She's out of breath when she gets to where they're standing. She stomps side to side to avoid the cold bay water.

-Oh just you wait, Doritz says.

-Just you all wait till your mother hears about this, Doritz the drunk nanny says.

On the long drive home Doritz moans sick-beast-wise, she holds her head and mutters along to the adult contemporary radio songs.

-Jesus, Two says.

-Lighten it up a little, Two says.

He's sitting in the back with his older brother and sister, having given up the front seat to the strangely quiet Three. Three listens to the radio and looks at his metal angel, turning it over and over in his hand.

-Nothing's gonna change my love for you, adult contemporary singer says.

Finally they get to the bridge over that wide outbound river, ready to cross back into Countenance. The city's great blue and black skyline looms near. With so much weekend traffic the car comes to a stop. Doritz lifts her forehead off the steering wheel to see the steady volley of good-luck coins go up from the open windows of cars, up in the air, over the rail, into the river.

-Shit for Christ!, Doritz says.

-I don't have any fucking change!, frantic Doritz the nanny says.

The three kids in the back snicker at her. 'Lixabeth tosses her hair in that wry, snotty way.

-Better just go ahead and throw over a twenty, 'Lixabeth says.

-Couldn't hurt, Two says.

They snicker some more. Meanwhile Doritz's eye catches the little angel coin Three's been fiddling with. She reaches over

and tries to win it from his hand.

-This'll do, Doritz says through clenched teeth.

Three's hand freezes shut and holds, but the sweat on his palms makes them feel slippery and weak, he cries out like he's losing his bowels. The sharp lady-fingers start to pry his fists open. Doritz turns from the steering wheel and grabs Three's little wrists in one hand and wrenches. He shrieks and sobs. Her long purple fingernail catches the edge of the angel coin and starts to wriggle it loose like a baby tooth.

All at once the shape of Two looms huge in the air above them, pressed up crooked against the ceiling of the car. He cocks his arm and punches Doritz square in the eye. Three feels her hand go limp. Two punches her again and the hand withdraws, he punches her yet again, he grabs her good around the neck, from the side, he chokes and shakes her, snarling.

-Filthy fucking sow-ass bitch!, Two says.

Doritz can't get a good angle to reach around and stop him. Two slams her against the steering wheel, he punches her mouth when she bounces back. The blood flows, freely. Three gets an awful racing feeling, he opens the door and jumps out. Two hits the nanny a last time and she blacks out. People in nearby cars are noticing, stopped cars behind are blowing their horns.

One pulls his brother off the nanny, she's gone flaccid in the seat. A wheezing/fuming Two crawls over his brother and out the door on the street side, he leaves the door wide open. He runs around the car and back down along the bridge railing. A car from the next lane over clips the door right off. People start gathering around the bloodied driver. Two and Three have disappeared. Soon an ambulance comes from Countenance, also a couple police cars. 'Lixabeth stands cross-armed and crying. One paces around in the dark, watching the dull face of Doritz go up into the back of the ambulance, looking like a roasted pig, all mute and swollen.

*Clark Roth lives with his guy in Philly and fronts the hot-core band Kandy Whales. He can be reached at clarkroth2001@yahoo.com.*

## OWL GAOL

SELECTIONS FROM THE BOOK OF DRAWINGS

BY HARRISON HAYNES



Harrison Haynes studied painting at the Rhode Island School of Design. He currently lives in New York City where he paints smallish watercolors depicting murky scenes of rurality. Owl Gaol is his first collection of drawings.

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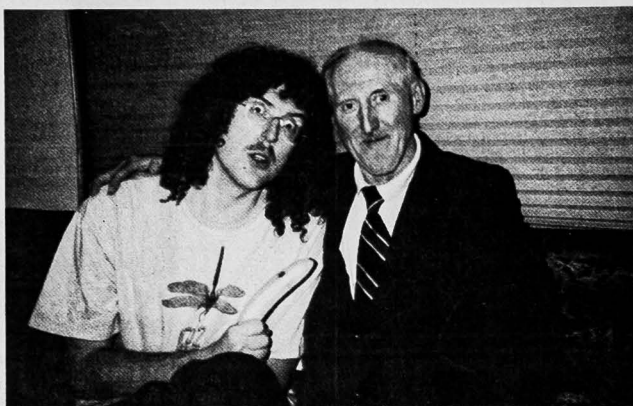


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## SPOTTINGS

BY CHARLIE V



Weird Al on left, Charlie V on right



Dan Akroyd on left, Charlie V center, Jim Belushi on right

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**ARTISTS WANTED:** The Illegal Art exhibition opened in New York to much media attention and has travelled to both Chicago and the San Francisco MOMA. This October, Nexus Gallery in Philadelphia will host the exhibition and include a group of local artists among the emerging and nationally-known contributors (including David Byrne and members of Negativland). In addition to the exhibition of 2D and 3D work, videos, and a music compilation, Nexus, in conjunction with Media Tank and Film at the Prince, will present a series of screenings, lectures, and culture-jamming sessions collectively known as the "Illegal Art Extravaganza." We are seeking Philadelphia-area artists who aren't afraid to challenge newly tightened "intellectual property" restrictions: whose work uses copyrighted images and logos; who are attempting to disrupt the control of meaning inherent in corporate imagery, consumer iconography, and public facades. Artists whose work has actually been challenged for such uses are particularly sought. The Illegal Art Exhibition will run from October 3, 2003 to November 2, 2003 at Nexus Gallery with an opening reception on October 3. Deadline for entries is August 15, 2003. // Submission Info: Visual artists (including those working in a zine or comic format) may submit slides, photos, printed examples, or CDs, properly labeled, to the address below. You may also email digital images or weblinks to [mdpruden@cs.com](mailto:mdpruden@cs.com). Include a resume with contact information and a SASE for any materials you would like returned. Images in digital media should be in a widely accessible format. The work itself should not greatly exceed 3 x 4 feet or 12 square feet for sculpture. Video artists/filmmakers should submit the work to be considered, or excerpts thereof, in VHS or DVD format, running time not to exceed 60 minutes (short films are preferred). Include a resume with contact information and SASE for any materials you would like returned. Musicians/sound artists may submit work in CD format. Include a resume and SASE for any materials you would like returned. There is no fee to submit or participate. You may make the work for sale, in which case Nexus asks 50 percent of the sale as a contribution. Submissions will be reviewed by Matthew Pruden, Exhibition Coordinator, and Nick Casway, Member President/Acting Gallery Director, of Nexus Foundation for Today's Art. For the accepted works, artists will be responsible for all shipping arrangements and costs, both delivery and return, to and from Nexus Gallery. ADDRESS SUBMISSIONS TO: Nexus Foundation for Today's Art, 137 North 2nd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106; Art: Illegal Art Exhibition (215) 629-1103. For additional information or questions, contact Matthew Pruden, Exhibition Coordinator, at (215) 467-4959 or [mdpruden@cs.com](mailto:mdpruden@cs.com).

**ARTIST SEEKS PATRON:** Philadelphia artist, looking to paint & study in Rome. Looking for a sponsor or patron. Please email [nadir\\_fanon@hotmail.com](mailto:nadir_fanon@hotmail.com)

**AUTOMOBILE FOR SALE:** Porsche 911 Carrera Coupe 1986, triple black, 105k mi., a/c, new stereo/CD player, moon roof, exc cond, rear wiper, w/cover - fast, reliable, \$21,500. I bought this 911 from Don Rosen, a high-end dealer here in Phila who'd taken it in trade from its original owner. It had about 88,000 miles. It hasn't needed much work at all. I've installed a new am/fm cd player, amplifier and speakers, replaced a significant amt of the undercar housing (for the air conditioning), and done normal maintenance (replace tires, oil changes, etc.). If you're looking for an older 911, this is really sweet. \*215-438-2666

**AUTOMOBILE FOR SALE:** White w/ white leather interior, low miles, nice shape. Garage kept by 2d owner for 20+ years.

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**BICYCLE WANTED:** My friend Tomo needs a bicycle. Tomo is really nice and everyone likes him. Maybe you have a sort of old bicycle you don't need and you could give it to Tomo because he is nice. You probably already know Tomo and you know he is nice, did you know he needs a bicycle? Please email [wormwoodhaze@hotmail.com](mailto:wormwoodhaze@hotmail.com).

**BURRITO CLUB:** Do you like burritos? Do you not really have any friends? If you answered yes to both of these questions, listen up, cupcake. Team Burrito might be just what you're looking for. Every Tuesday at 12:30 Team Burrito congregates at one of many center city burrito establishments and enjoys burrito related conversation, art work, and trivia. If you think you have what it takes to join Team Burrito, saddle up and send resumes to [crazy4saway@hotmail.com](mailto:crazy4saway@hotmail.com).

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**FREE ZINE:** Tom Foolery number five is out now. It's entitled "california: a not so short story." The philadelphia-based fanzine is 14,000 words in length and free. If you'd like a copy, simply email [jeffpelly@aol.com](mailto:jeffpelly@aol.com) and provide your mailing address. Jeff will handle the rest.

**FILM:** East Philly Cinema Under the Stars New Kensington CDC and Friends of Konrad Square will co-host Scribe Video Center's Street Movies, featuring "SK8 B-LO 1-95," Big Tea Party's documentary on the evolution of FDR, Philadelphia's first public skatepark, and Education Video Center's "Hip Hop: A Culture of Influence," plus environmental claymation from Australia, and other independent shorts to be announced. This free, all-ages event begins at 8:30pm, Friday, August 8th, at Konrad Square, 2200 E. Dauphin @ Tulip in Fishtown/Kensington. (Rain location: Summerfield Church across the street.) Food will be available from local vendors. Bring a blanket or beach chair, bug stuff, and an open mind. Nearby public transit: York-Dauphin El station, buses 3, 5, 25 & 30. For more info: 215-735-3785 [www.scribe.org](http://www.scribe.org)

**HELP WANTED:** Motivated and personable booklover needed to manage on-line sales and some light retail sales. Must be organized, focussed and have a good relationship with computers (PC). About 20 hours a week, no weekends or early mornings. Molly's Cafe & Bookstore, 1010 S. 9th Street, 215-923-3367

**MAGAZINE:** The only local music magazine reaching 30,000+ people monthly. Starting out as just a small website in June 2001, Origination Magazine has been helping to bring the local music scene together via print since December 2001. Distribution includes Philadelphia and the surrounding communities, South Jersey, Delaware and Central PA. The magazine's website, [originationmag.com](http://originationmag.com), details even more about the scene with local music news, hundreds of band links, press releases, venue information and more. Finally, our message board, which to date has had over 19,000 posts and over 670,000 hits since September 2001, has become the unofficial meeting place for musicians and fans to discuss the scene. For more information: email [origination@aol.com](mailto:origination@aol.com) or go to [www.originationmag.com](http://www.originationmag.com)

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**MUSIC FOR SALE:** NJ Rock/Funk/Hardcore band Knuckle Sandwich's "Nice" cd is available online at [www.resurrectionad.com](http://www.resurrectionad.com) or any online retailer (Amazon, Yahoo, CD Now) Please visit [www.knucklesandwich.com](http://www.knucklesandwich.com) for free MP3 downloads. Catch the band on tour this fall.

**PARTY:** Well of Soul! Sunday, August 24 @ Silk City. Once more with feeling--the sweet soul sounds of Motown, Stax, Northern and more, courtesy of your host Soul Korea. Dancing shoes required. 10 pm - 2 am, \$3. "You don't miss your water till the well runs dry."

**PARTY:** S.P.I.C.E. It's their last dance at summer camp. Saturday August 23rd Upstairs at the Olive Branch (38 S.19th St. b/n Market and Chestnut Sts.) 1 more band TBA, plus DJs until 2am

**PERSONAL:** 1 Lie Every 16 Words. What kind of average is that for a world leader? North American country seeks new administration. Britain seeks new scientist. Iraqi children seek new limbs. Post suggestions on city walls.

**PERSONAL:** Much love to all of my people back in philadel. Australia is most beautiful I'll see you all in 5 months. Mitchell.

**PERSONAL:** Dear [www.wantboard.com](http://www.wantboard.com): Get bent. Except my special ladies. Love, Madmax

**PERSONAL:** Dear Motorist: In just a few seconds, I will be passing your automobile. Please don't open the door without looking to see if it's safe to do so. This will save you a serious problem and allow me to get home to the family in one piece. Thanks, A. Bicyclist.

**PERSONAL:** Dear Motorist: What if each time I locked or unlocked my bicycle, I let out with a loud *whooop-whooop* sound? What if I did it outside your house, no matter what the hour? I'm sure you would be annoyed. That's why I'm asking you to use something silent, like the Club, to secure your steering wheel (and thus the rest of your car) and give you peace of mind without stealing other's tranquility. Much appreciated, A. Bicyclist.

**PERSONAL:** Schatz--I dont mind you comin' here, and wasting all my time... Ich Liebe Dich. Deine Bougie.

**PERSONAL:** Who Stole Our Sign? Someone came and stole our sign at SkateNerd. Metal said he is gonna kick your ass.

**PETITION:** Free Love Park. Visit [www.ushistory.org/lovepark](http://www.ushistory.org/lovepark). Sign the petition and help bring LOVE back to the public.

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**RADIO SHOW SEEKS LISTENERS:** My name is Jon Solomon and I would not mind if you listened to my radio show on WPRB every Wednesday evening starting at 7:00 pm ET. If you want to check out archived streams of our in-studio live guests or read playlists go to [keepingscoreathome.com](http://keepingscoreathome.com). I think that's it. Over and out.

**READING:** Open Letters Reading featuring the esteemed Erik Bader and lovely Loren Hunt. Open reading to follow (this means you!), featuring letters of all shapes, sizes, smells and origins. We accept the reading of any and all letters, including but not limited to love scraps, rejection letters, shut off notices, class notes, drunken and shameful emails. This event is set to happen on Sunday, August 10th at 8pm at fergie's pub (upstairs), 1218 Sansom Street. [lettersreading@hotmail.com](mailto:lettersreading@hotmail.com) for more information. \$3.

**RECIPES WANTED:** Tell me about your favorite vegetarian/vegan dishes, tips/tricks - help me to quit eating out all the time. The simpler the better. Email [veggie@space1026.com](mailto:veggie@space1026.com).

**SCANNER FOR SALE:** Epson 1650 Scanner 1600x3200dpi - Never Used. Brand New (not in box, can't return) i.e. no hardware, software, cables & extras. USB. \$75. Will deliver in Center City. Call Leigh 215-732-4745

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**WEBZINE:** Besides the Independent, the only publication worth reading is WWW.MUMBLAGE.COM. Fulfilling your need for exposes on dead Soviet leaders and Oregon men who are building their own spaceships since approximately 1993. WWW.MUMBLAGE.COM

**ZINE FOR SALE:** Out now: "Deadlin'" - a poetic zine with words by S. Sebastian Petru (Poet's Groove) and layout/visuals by Mark Price (Dictionary of Cut-Up Hands) It's a distinctive size: too: 4.25"x11" with an 11"x17" fold-out cover-- crazy! A fine addition to your collection, be you a nerd or artist. Available for \$2 from S. Petru 4811 Springfield Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19143 [poetgroove@yahoo.com](mailto:poetgroove@yahoo.com) send email for free sample of the text.

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NOSTALGIA IS WHAT COMES AFTER THE BACKLASH

## LORD WHIMSY'S SEASONAL DIVERSIONS

*Outdoor Leisure as it Pertains to Taste; Or, How One's Refinement might Serve as an Aesthetic Compass that Allows Safe Passage Through the Tawdry Temptations of Summer*

BY LORD WHIMSY



Each morning that greets us presents choices with regards to taste. This is especially true during this, the least tasteful time of year when those among us, who in any other season exercise good judgment when it comes to aesthetic matters, unwittingly engage in that unfortunate phenomenon coined by Paul Fussell as Prole Drift. As surely as the ebbing of the tide, I have seen the shimmering ranks of bon vivants diminish each year around this time as Old Man Navy snatches some of our more promising youth who – alas! – after suffering the degradations that only cargo shorts and “flipped flops” can bring, never again return to the ranks of the spiritual aristocracy, or at least do not burn as brightly as they otherwise might have.

Like a great ant-lion, Dread Summer lies in wait each year for hapless youths to slide down the slippery slope of lawn chairs and cookouts into its gaping maw. To think of all those carefully-coiffed curls tossed into sweaty disarray sends me into a fit of such vio-

lent grief that I am bedridden for days afterwards. For the sake of my constitution I dare not dwell long on such unpleasant tableaux, but since I have a solemn duty to my readers I will now leap atop the battlements once again with nosegay in hand to spare civilization's flowers the plight of bruised petals and puffy pistils, and to show those who might lack restraint how to engage in summertime activities without succumbing to the slovenly siren song of Prole Drift.

Here are a few maxims to guide you through the tempests of Summer safely and into subdued, Autumnal harbors:

Regarding Outdoor Social Events: Avoid all events sponsored by the King of Beers, lest you find a vile film of prole musk befouling your best summer finery. Best to frequent cottillions, garden parties and regattas rather than a cookout or, God forbid, a tailgate party. No good can come of such gatherings, as they are a melange of tasteless people wearing tasteless clothes, listening to tasteless music, eating tasteless food and playing tasteless

games. A truly ghastly scene, even if you've brought your own martinis in an effort to steel yourself.

Regarding Sun Protection: Parasols are preferable, as they allow the crowning glory of one's carefully arranged locks to thrive, and lend a luminous, flattering glow with their indirect lighting. If parasols are not a viable option, then hats are your next choice. As a general rule, hat brims must inhabit the full circumference of the head, be non-adjustable and completely lacking in plastic meshes. Modestly scented sunscreen is essential, unless you wish to have the leathery hide of a mere field hand. I also find that a selection of brightly-hued sarongs maintain the ghostly whiteness of my legs for the entire season, and come in the same colors as my favorite fruity drinks – including clear, which thoroughly rangles the clergy at garden parties, much to my delight.

Regarding Outdoor Leisure Activities: Just as clothing lowers in taste with increased legibility (see last issue), it is likewise true that

the use of internal combustion increases as one descends the social ladder. Motor boats, jet skis, monster trucks, Recreational Vehicles, All Terrain Vehicles, and faux-paneled station wagons full of screaming families are to be not only avoided, but feared. Many have been the times that the reverie of my Summer idylls brought on by the peace and quiet of a bucolic scene have been shattered by the presence of a mechanized couch potato, his overfed behind wrapped around some flutulent sport futility vehicle. The hellish sounds and smells of such beasts do violence to the ears as well as give off noxious gases that neither thrill nor beguile (I speak of both rider and vehicle here). Just look at how mechanical in nature the gait, demeanor and speech of an individual becomes when one spends an inordinate amount of time around these contraptions; they only serve to hasten one's trip to a graceless existence. A true flaneur will prefer the earthy bouquet of a freshly made road apple set lovingly in cobblestone-like an anal gem-over the olfactory insult offered by the

foul vapors of prehistoric machine-tar blurted out by incontinent horseless carriages.

That having been said, sailboats, high-wheel bicycles, rickshaws, velocipedes, horses, divans, carriages, hammocks, Hessian riding boots and tasseled silk slippers are all graceful, dignified modes of transportation that do not impinge upon the peace of mind of others. Many of these options allow the passenger or pilot a commanding view of his surroundings, and one is right to feel justified in projecting an air of cold indifference as one presides over all beneath him, refreshing the heated brow of the crowd with the icy chill of his hauteur. Likewise, the unwashed throngs may then have an unimpeded view of one's radiance and poise in the midday sun, and so thus one may then fully serve in the office bequeathed unto him by Nature: as an Ambassador of Paradise.

With Regard to Summer Sports: I would avoid such base folly as sport, but if the urge to make a prancing nincompoop of one's self proves to be too strong, it would serve to keep the following rule of thumb handy: Mr. Paul

Fussell has wisely pointed out in his writings that the smaller the ball, the more tasteful the game. Avoid all sport involving any ball larger than a fist, as not only is one's social standing in jeopardy if one engages in such brutish activity, but one will invariably become sweaty and disheveled, as the “large ball” games are much more physically demanding and as such are generally unpleasant. Even if one decides to play with the smaller balls found in genteel circles, it is always better to watch a game of croquet than to participate in one. Indeed, one may easily amuse one's self as a spectator by providing slurred, ribald color commentary (preferably within earshot of one's younger relations) whilst sipping one's fourth whiskey sour and quietly contemplating the atrocious arrangements in the host's flowerbed.

And so I say unto thee, gentle reader: stand fast and hold thy ground, for Autumn-sweet, melancholy Autumn-is nigh!

Allen Crayford is an Assistant Editor at THE INDEPENDENT.

FURTHER READING: *Class* by Paul Fussell. Ballantine Books, 1981

## WHIMSY'S PRINCIPLES OF AESTHETICS

◆ THE THRILLETANTE SYNAPTIC ARRAY ◆  
or, the WHIMSY INSOMNIA ENGINE

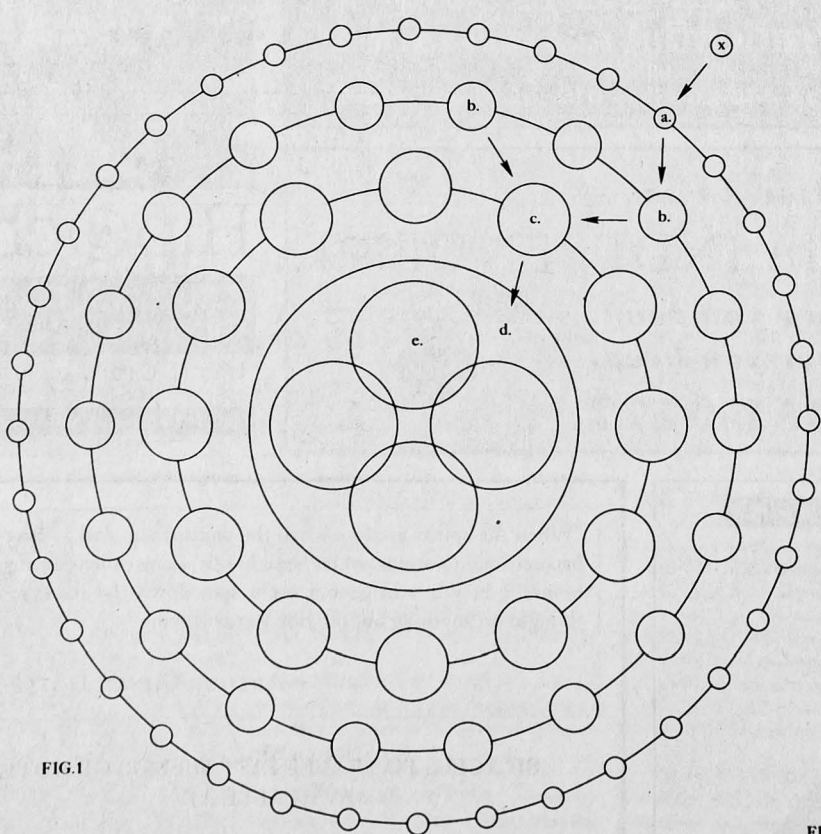


FIG.1



FIG.2: detail of FIG.1

(Fig. 1): The chart above depicts a mind fueled – nay, *inspired* – by the relationships between all things in Creation; and the method by which said mind might amass a breadth of knowledge and understanding heretofore unheard of in these Former Colonies. The most outer ring represents the individual's casual INTERESTS and/or subjects that have only recently piqued the curiosity (a), whose main functions at this stage are to be used as departure points or references to other possible subjects (s) that may be of interest, or to be incorporated into the collection of more developed interests, coined here as ENTHUSIASMS (b). ENTHUSIASMS may remain dormant for months or even decades until a potent enough combination with another ENTHUSIASM or INTEREST allows it to become compelling enough to be acted upon, resulting in a physical manifestation, the PROJECT (c). PROJECTS can also revert back to being ENTHUSIASMS if not acted upon after a certain length of time, but once in a great while they are incorporated into the CORE SELF (d).

where the ENDEAVORS reside (e). ENDEAVORS are known for being in a constant state of flux, sometimes combining with other ENDEAVORS, causing what is known as an obsession, or CALLING. INTERESTS that are internalized this far into the self have a tendency to remain in the CORE SELF for a long time, if not for life – but in more mercurial personalities, have been known to drift outward into the orbits again if not maintained. While the outward drift is characterized as gradual, the same is not always true of the drawing inward of interests, which in rare cases, most commonly in early adulthood, is prone to very dramatic chain reactions in the outer and inner rings, which can then slam into the CORE SELF, bringing an immediate CALLING into being within the CORE SELF, causing what is known as a BLOWN MIND. This leaves the CORE SELF in a kind of unstable state (see Fig. 2), until at which time the CORE SELF has reconstituted its inner structure.

## WHIMSY'S PRINCIPLES OF AESTHETICS

◆ THRILLETANTISM ◆  
or, the beneficial effects of ARTISTIC and PHILOSOPHICAL LYCANTHROPY  
by means of the FRANKLIN METHOD of INCESSANT DABBLING (a roman-a-clef)

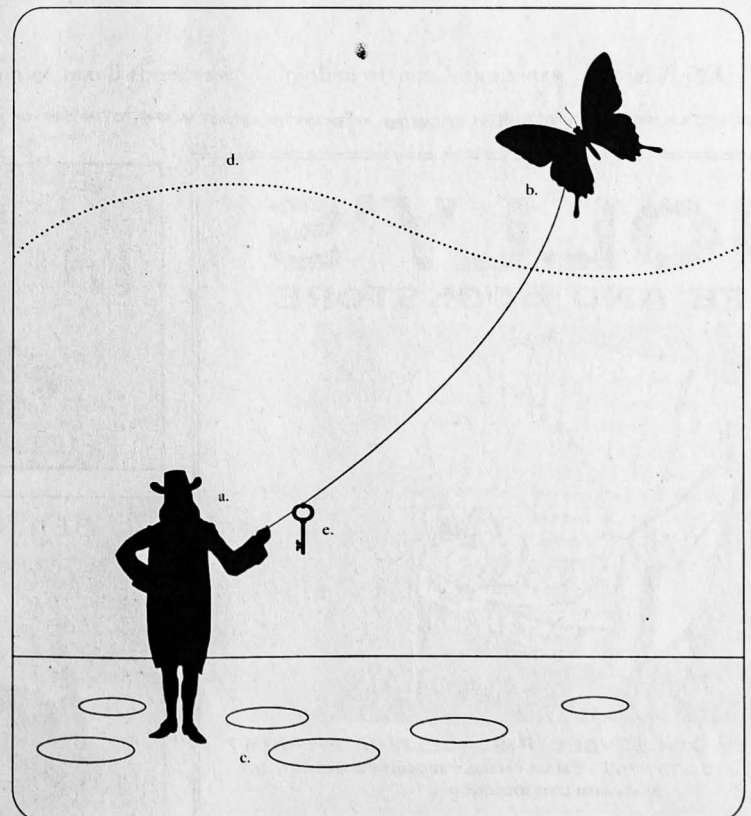


FIG.1

(Fig. 1): The chart above depicts the method by which THRILLETANTISM (not to be confused with its poor cousin, DILLETANTISM) utilizes the Mind of Man. The THRILLETANTE (a), or the “Inchiest of Brains”, to use folk etymology, uses the mind (b) like a kite, as opposed to the majority of the Family of Man, who employ the mind as a shovel, as evidenced by (c). The THRILLETANTE soars the Heights of Contemplation (d) for a Divine Spark triggered by a word, image or idea tickles his or her Fancy (e), with often colorful and surprising results; in fact, Hilarity often ensues.

THRILLETANTISM, inasmuch as it is in accord with the principles established by BENJAMIN FRANKLIN and ERASMUS DARWIN (see AFFECTED PROVINCIALISM, p.277), is a journey of the soul; its restlessness is matched only by its ingenuity. Because the THRILLETANTE is not burdened with a blinding omniscience in any one field of endeavor, he or she may focus on exploration and on using said exploration as a foundation on which to build an interesting, broad yet thoughtful life, the fruits of which are generously shared with others. However, this isn't to say that the THRILLETANTE does not use opportunity as a means by which Blessed Profit may accrue. THRILLETANTISM is a bastard stepchild of the ENLIGHTENMENT; and as such, adopts the rationalist tenet that one must employ practical means in order to achieve impractical ends. No grubby bohemian, he.

The THRILLETANTE is an amalgam of Culture and Nature, and there is precious little that rallies beneath the gilded and bloody banner of Creation that does not interest such an individual. The

THRILLETANTE understands the value of play, it's fluidity of mind and the interesting failures that are its children. The THRILLETANTE relishes the role of Eternal Novice and the constant rebirth it engenders.

It should be noted here that it would be a mistake to say that the THRILLETANTE's scope is a mile wide and an inch deep; for the THRILLETANTE is aware that true knowledge is born of sincere interest, study, vigor and discipline. It is these very qualities which ultimately yield insight into related fields of interest, thereby creating a vast network of interrelated nodes of erudition that serve as a kind of improvised expertise in its own right (see ENTHUSIAST ARRAY, p. 336). The THRILLETANTE might pick up skills and instruction that lead to a kind of competency or even proficiency in certain endeavors, which are always a welcome addition to his or her repertoire, for they are the Keys That Open All Doors. A THRILLETANTE can be likened to that of a butterfly that drinks especially deep from the flowers it visits, a busy Tiger Swallowtail with an unquenchable thirst for the nectar of intriguing orchids. The THRILLETANTE dismisses the false dichotomy that one must go “wide” or “deep” in their life's trajectory. A canard!

That having been said, an argument could be made that it is the combined activities of the THRILLETANTE and his somewhat sober, sagely counterpart, the Specialist, or EXPERT, that enables the advancement of all Human Endeavor. It is a partnership as old as Man and Woman, sanctioned by Divine Providence, for both are the living pistons of the Engine of Progress.



## THE SEASONED SUPPER

FOOD DOES NOT GROW ON SHELVES



PHOTO: JESSICA JUZWIAK

## COOKING WITH SAL

BY SAL RAZAVI

When the mercury reaches for the sky, the wise eater takes advantage of summer's bounty. Rather than laboring for hours over a casserole or some type of elaborately baked pasta dish, the chefs of summertime should turn their attention to grilling and to using locally grown fresh vegetables. In the spirit of warm-weather culinary concoctions, we present Sal's Summer Swordfish and a leafy green stir-fry with udon noodles. This meal will suit you well for a romantic dinner for two on a porch, in a dining room, or even in the park. You may enjoy eating in the warmth of the sun, or you might prefer the nervous flicker of a candle. If you're outdoors and you light a torch, you'll instantly feel as if you're by the sea. Also recommended is at least one bottle of a white wine from California, which is known to promote scoring big.

## SAL'S SUMMER SWORDFISH:

- 8 oz swordfish
- 1oz lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 oz virgin olive oil

1. Find a bowl, and use it to mix up the lemon juice, oil, salt, turmeric and pepper. Mix it up real good, and then marinate the swordfish with it. You'll want to mix it around a little bit more and let it sit in there for about five minutes.

2. Put a sheet of aluminum foil down on the counter. Put a sheet of wax paper (the dry, low wax type is best) on top of the foil. The wax paper is necessary to keep the fish from getting all stuck up on the foil. Put the fish on the paper, and pour the rest of the marinade over it. Then wrap up the fish. Then wrap some more aluminum foil around it to keep it sealed. Keep the seam upwards or you'll get marinade all over the counter.

3. Light up your grill. When it gets to a temperature that might be described as medium-high, toss that foiled fish on the rack. Keep it on for thirty-five minutes. You don't need to flip it around or make a fuss with it. Just let it cook, okay? You may notice that some of the juice will find ways to escape the foil. Don't make a fuss about that either. It smells nice. If you notice the wax paper catches fire, don't worry about that either. That's not going to cause any harm.

4. After thirty-five minutes on the heat, take that package off the grill. Peel open the foil and let it sit open for about five minutes. That poor fish has been through a lot, and it needs some time to regroup and to let the extra juice simmer down.

5. Eat the fish. You may want to share it with a friend. You may want to share a bottle of fine wine as well.

## SAL'S SUMMER STIR-FY

A Leafy Stir-fry with Udon noodles

- 1 big bunch of fresh spinach
- 1 big bunch of fresh Watercress
- 5 or 6 cloves of garlic
- 1 lb. of Japanese style rice noodles
- sesame oil
- 1 cup of water
- pinch of salt
- handful of bean sprouts

1. Decide how much spinach you'd like to eat. Then, get yourself a bunch that's twice as big. Find yourself an identical quantity of watercress. Wash that spinach down and cut that spinach up.

2. Take your blender of your cabinet. You may find it necessary to take—with permission—your neighbor's blender. Take five or six cloves of garlic, skin them, and drop them in the blender. Add a single ounce of water and a pinch of salt. Set the machine to puree, and let the blades do their thing. Add a cup of water to the puree and mix it.

3. Find the biggest pan available. If you find your kitchen poorly stocked, you may need your neighbor's help with this as well. Oil up that pan, and heat the oil real hot.

4. Add the noodles.

5. Drop in the cut spinach.

6. Add half of the garlic and water mixture. Stir around the noodles and the spinach. You don't want anything sticking to the pan. That much is for sure.

7. When the spinach starts shrinking and taking on a darker green color, add the watercress. Keep mixing up the whole thing and add the rest of the garlic mixture.

8. About a minute after the watercress joins the party, turn off the heat. You don't want to overcook these bastards—they're ninety percent water. You'll want the greens crisp. You need those vitamins.

9. Toss in some bean sprouts for garnish, and it's ready to serve.

## SAL'S SUMMERTIME TIP OF THE DAY:

Always water down soy sauce to about fifty percent. Bottled soy sauce, you see, is often too strong and ends up overpowering the other flavors.

Sal Razavi serves junk free food at Salsolito Café.

from RITA, page 5

she'll want my opinion on Marie's parenting, and so I will, for example, agree with Tracy that an eight o'clock curfew is quite unreasonable. "You know Rebecca," Rita will say, nodding, "you've really got your head screwed on."

Rita is very eager to understand Tracy's and my generation. Though perhaps she would never dream of touching a computer, she's nonetheless very interested to learn about all we can do on the internet. Sometimes she and I will get into almost sociological discussions, with me explaining what teenagers do when they "go out" or how so many girls can be so bitchy. She realizes that nobody gets married at eighteen anymore, as she was, but this she deems to be an improvement, because at that age she "just didn't know" what she was doing. I often feel like I'm a sort of generational mediator, somewhere between Tracy and Rita. Rita trusts my opinion far more than she'd trust Marie's, or, certainly, her son-in-law Tommy's. Having only met Tracy and Marie a couple of times, I know them only through Rita, who has left me with the image of two South Philly transplants in maroon lipstick screaming at one another at the top of their lungs.

I wonder whom she used to complain to about her daughter before she had me. I've never heard her mention the names of anyone outside of her family. She chats with the lady up the block or the girl downstairs, maybe having one over for a cup of coffee, but she doesn't have a particular bond with anyone. She has, though, alluded to the fact that a lot of people she knows are dying, and it seems that her breed of sixty-five-plus South Philly Italians is slowly becoming endangered.

Once Rita's generation is gone, all the people who never lived anywhere but South Philly, who can't drive, who are deeply loyal to neighborhoods, I wonder what will be left there. In twenty years from now, will any South Philly people actually live in South Philly, or will it just become a ghost town, a tourist attraction for aging South Jersey and Delaware County folk who drive in to buy a ham for Christmas dinner? Even within the last few years, Rita's noticed some changes. "I don't walk around at night no more, Rebecca, I'm too scared." Nobody's even in Guerin Playground across the street anymore.

Still, we often hear her patriotically croon what I imagine she'll say on her deathbed, "I'd never want to live noowhere but my Soooouth Philly." To which my brother might say, goading her, "You know, there are other parts of the city." "Aaaahhh," she'd reply, raising her fist in mock exasperation, "va te faire foutre!"

Rebecca Datzell is an undergraduate majoring in History at the University of Pennsylvania.

## FINDINGS

BY HENRY FLOSS



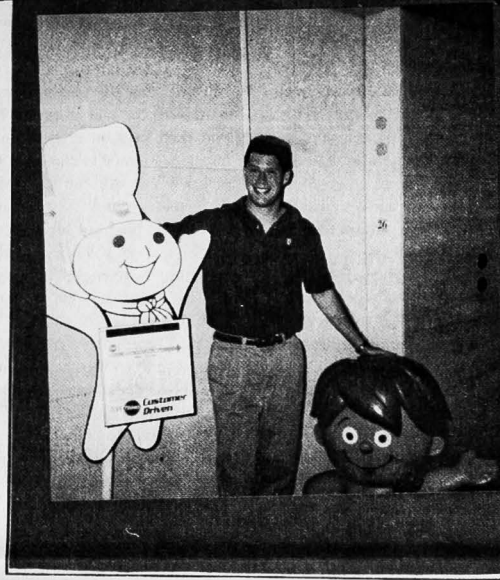
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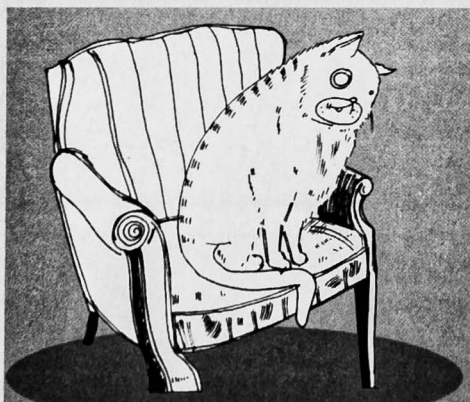
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JC Todd is the author of *Nightshade* and *Entering Pieces*. Her poems have appeared in APR, The Paris Review, Prairie Schooner and other journals. She writes a quarterly literary column, Riverviews, for The Drunken Boat, an on-line journal. Awards include a Leeway Foundation Award, a Fellowship in Poetry from Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, five Pushcart Prize nominations and a residency fellowship to Schloss Wiepersdorf.

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SHORT CUTS

## LINER NOTES

## THE TROUBLE WITH SWEENEY

*I Know You Destroy*  
Burnt Toast Vinyl

Man, these guys must like Wilco a whole lot. The sophomore album from Philadelphia/Ardmore quartet The Trouble With Sweeney pulls the same tricks as Jeff Tweedy and company, draping rootsy compositions with the fabric of 1960s pop and 1990s indie rock. A slide guitar twangs, drumbeats shuffle, a Fender Rhodes hums and singer/guitarist Joey Sweeney's sardonic sandpaper voice sounds somewhat if not directly influenced by Tweedy. Not that influence a bad thing, it just permeates *I Know You Destroy* with an overall sense of familiarity, a sense of "Hmmm, I've heard this before somewhere." But familiarity can be good, comforting even, and the eleven storytelling songs that comprise *Destroy* are a mostly solid set.

The album opens with the first of many breakup tales titled, suitably enough, "The Break Up," where reverberating drums and a minor key acoustic guitar patterns accentuate Sweeney's melancholic lyrics. Kids in a cemetery yell at each other over a bottle of booze and a classic rock riff in "The Snitch," while an odd conga-influenced beat carries the tale of Catholic school woe "The Biggest Mary In The Entire School." The band seems to lose its shit when it loses the drum work of Richard Stuverud; the beat-free, gap-of-silence-heavy "Why Can't Anything Be Easy, Baby?" sounds painfully drawn out for being a mere four minutes in length. But with the album-closing "The Counterfeiters," Sweeney and friends get the drumless sound right with a chiming piano and 1950s chord progression for the first two-and-a-half minutes, then Stuverud kicks in full force and brings the cut to a rollicking close.

-JOHN VETTESE

## NONE MORE BLACK

*File Under Black*  
Fat Wreck Chords

A little over five years ago, Jason Shevchuk walked into a practice space (with lyrics in hand) and nailed a tryout that enabled him to front Kid Dynamite, one of the most energetic bands to come from the streets of our fine city. Drama aside, Kid Dynamite came to an end just two years later and Jason was left trying to find some missing pieces.

After a bit of a long search, a number of member changes, and some help from Fat Wreck Chords, things have finally come together once again for Jason, as new band, None More Black, released their debut, *File Under Black* earlier this summer.

It's traditional melodic hardcore, but Jason's signature woeah-woahs and personal lyrics are what really make this one stand out. The first track, "Everyday Balloons" starts off rough with an energy fans of Kid Dynamite will remember, but then the hook comes in, setting None More Black's sound up. And, it's catchy as hell. In a word, they are poppy, and this poppiness a good thing. Think of a more polished version of Dag Nasty with strained vocals. Or better yet, Jawbreaker with an edge, build-ups and breakdowns. Pay close attention to "Banned from Teen Arts" and "Risk Management" as lyrically, they hit pretty close to home (in the literal sense).

Although *File Under Black* was recorded right in the middle of one of our worst winters yet, it's the perfect complement to summer with fourteen songs make you want to sing along.

-JEFFREY D. PELLY

ARIES: March 20 - April 19

There comes a time in the life of every ram when work predominates. The ram has a boundless capacity for pleasure, but now is not the time to indulge those impulses. Put your nose to the grindstone and do your bloody job! If you don't, you'll feel the demons crowding around your head. Around the 13th is when those demons will be at their most virulent. If you need a kick in the pants, break out the pills and forge ahead. If you need to escape for a while, Venus and Jupiter in your fifth house guarantee that you'll be able to. You may even find the strength to go on through a new love interest. Key aphorism for this month: Discipline precedes dominion.

TAURUS: April 20 - May 19

You don't like to be jolted; bulls are essentially placid creatures; but you should prepare for some rodeo-sized jolts coming your way. The issue is friends, that wanton crew who your brought on board to love and care for you. The problem is, you may get the distinct impression that people are clinging to your indomitable strength, rather than serving any useful purpose in your life. If this is the case, now may be a good time to hole up in your "bull-pen" and make something beautiful; pottery, handicrafts, or even some of those good old-fashioned brownies you have such a way with. Towards the middle of the month should be your most centered time, ideal for throwing all the dead weight overboard.

GEMINI: May 20 - June 20

You want to be somewhere else, in a galaxy far, far away. This is a time of prescient fantasy for Gemini, a time when you receive Coleridge-like visions out of nowhere, Kubla Khans and Ancient Mariners. Write them all down; they will only seem unforgettable to you for a short duration of time and a snapshot your impressions will prove useful after they fade. These visions are a key to your subconscious (or, considering your Gemini orientation, your double-consciousness) and will broaden your intellectual, spiritual, and psychological range as a person. Early in the month may be fraught; you may take a bad trip, possibly chemical, possibly vehicular. A good way to ground yourself would be to bring an old friend with you on your trips and avoid steep, narrow staircases.

CANCER: June 21 - July 21

If you are in any way religious, be very careful; Mars ruling up your ninth house will make you inclined to fanaticism. Cancer is an emotional sign, and when you identify with your ideals, it can get

## MONTHLY

## FORECAST

WE READ THE ENTRAILS SO YOU CAN SAVE YOUR GOAT FOR LATER.

## The Rizzoscope

## BUSTING YOUR CRYSTAL BALLS

BY ADAM FIELED

pretty scary. Can you stay calm for one minute? Good; now slowly, calmly, rationally communicate what you want to communicate. If you can keep control of yourself, now is the time to start a dialogue with friends, teachers, rabbis, whomever. You will learn the validity of your beliefs, though you may find them less air-tight than you had imagined. The most emphatic moments will come in the last week of the month; keep an oxygen-tank handy, and, perhaps, some tranquilizers.

LEO: July 22 - August 22

Trying to throw your arms around the world again? Give it up, big cat! If you love somebody (and you must, being a regal romantic), set them free. It is hard; Neptune in the seventh house assures that what seems real in the ones you love may be an illusion, or even an outright fabrication on their part. But, big-hearted lion that you are, Venus in conjunction with Jupiter will have you forgive, forget, and be on to other adventures. In fact, this August may be one of your finest moments, with three planets dancing in your already ebullient first house. You may find yourself drunk, happy, and satisfied with the world at last. As the month closes, a spiritual triumph will be yours.

VIRGO: August 23 - September 21

Suddenly, as Mercury moves into your first house, what can at times seem pleasantly loquacious may turn annoying. There are strong, silent Virgos (though not many), but even if you are one of those, be careful. The lighter side of this transit is that you may be incredibly funny, the life of the party and then some. Just rein yourself in when you have to. Things may be a little vague at work right now; or you may find yourself drifting aimlessly from job to job. Or between and around jobs. When Venus joins Mercury in your sign towards the end of the month, you may finally find the

hook-up you've been looking for, an be able to get down to the virgin's business: perfection!

LIBRA: September 22 - October 22

As Saturn moves through your house of profession, you may have to confront an issue that you like to skirt around (in typical Libran fashion)—the necessary balance between ambition (Libra is, after all, a cardinal sign) and satisfaction with the present moment (also essential for the Libran temperament). You want to relax, but the boss wants you to keep going. Or, you are the boss, and you push people around more than you'd like to admit. Either way, your real job is to follow Buddha along the Middle Path. The third way. The road less traveled. The happy medium. Straight down the middle. Wasting some serious time with glamorous new friends might give you the perspective you need right now. By September, you'll be recharged.

SCORPIO: October 23 - November 21

Well, whatever else is happening with you now, you certainly look good. Suddenly, members of the opposite sex stop to gaze at you in the street. You feel like a magnet for new trouble, trouble of the most delicious sort. The problem is that all this attention is feeding your ego, not your soul. Yeah, your soul. What your soul needs is to concentrate on higher things. Remember that fancy book you never finished? Now is the time to fish it out and plough through it. Things you read now may have an unusual and stimulating effect on your psyche. You may find yourself making friends with all sorts of card-carrying intellectuals. If one of them is hot and gives you their number, don't hesitate—dial it.

SAGITTARIUS: November 22 - December 21

You are the most famously lucky person you know. You can step on banana peels without slipping, drive on water without hydroplaning, drink

ten Jack and Cokes and still feel fresh as a daisy. Oh, look out, archer. Crusty old Saturn is entering your eighth house, where even the happy planets get all muddy, slip on banana peels, hydroplane. Translation—someone may very well break your heart, sooner rather than later. Not even necessarily a lover—could be a trusted friend or a family member. Being an archer, you'll want to philosophize, but you may (for once) be stunned into silence. What to do next? Pack a rucksack and hit the road, Sag.

CAPRICORN: December 22 - January 19

You're about to find love that's like thunder, lightning—and you damn well better knock out wood and make yourself a belt out of rabbits' feet. You'll be the envy of everyone in your general circle—who wouldn't want Venus and Jupiter doing the Watusi on their birth chart? The best thing of all is that this new relationship will connect you with new faces, and new viewpoints. I hardly need to tell you to keep a close watch on your finances, you prudent little miser, you, but be careful what Mister or Miss Wonderful does to your purse-strings. Even if you wind up spending more than you might want to, it will be worth it.

AQUARIUS: January 20 - February 17

If you're now in the throes of a dedicated relationship, someone could start bickering about joint finances and not stop. Or someone could feel sexually neglected and not afraid to take the upper hand somehow. In either case, what you need to do is have a good, honest fight, to clear the air of all the accumulated tension. If you can get past this hurdle, Venus/Jupiter are waiting to bestow the treasure of real, balanced happiness upon you. All this drama is making it hard for you to work, or else, you've become a raging workaholic, and made work your only outlet. As with your relationship, what you need is to let accumulated tensions dissolve of their own accord.

PISCES: February 18 - March 19

Carping and criticism are not things that come naturally to the tranquil fish. Nor do they especially appreciate being criticized unduly. Unfortunately, the fish may be in for some serious dressing down. Are you used to getting away with lazy behavior? Your friends are not going to let you get away with it anymore. You will be forced to admit that you've been slacking on some level. Oddly enough, you may find that while on a personal level you are being taken to task, professionally you are flourishing. Right around the 14th these conflicting elements will come to a head and you will be left in your trusty old pond, trying to make sense of it all.

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dc. dischord dc. dischord

**ELECTRIC TURN TO ME**  
ex laddio bolocko/mars volta

Tuesday September 9th 7:30pm

**FLOOR**  
from fl. only east coast show. no idea recs

Sunday September 14th 7:30pm

**THE EX**  
from the netherlands. touch and go records

**ERASE ERATTA** **NUMBERS**  
troubleman tigerbeat 6

Sunday September 28th 8:00pm

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Sun 8/10 - TO BE ANNOUNCED  
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Thurs 8/14 - MOBILE PLEASURE LOUNGE (FEAT. MEMBERS OF BIG TREE)  
Fri 8/15 - DR. KETCHUP-ROVERTA PICKETT & ALTERNATING CURRENTS (NYC)  
Sat 8/16 - SAIGON SUM  
Mon 8/18 - SMÜT-DJ: JEREMY & BOBBY (FROM BETTY WHITETRASH) & SWITCHBLADE  
Tues 8/19 - A ROCK TITS EVENT (7PM MR. BERG HUMAN JUKEBOX)-FREE  
Thurs 8/21 - HARD LIQUOR THEATER  
Fri 8/22 - NATURAL SELECTION - BLUE METHOD  
Sat 8/23 - ODEAN POPE TRIO  
Thurs 8/28 - 7PM- KALAPARUSH MAURICE MCINTYRE TRIO W/ RAVISH MIMIA  
10PM- 'SON OF TURNAROUND' W/ DJ GREG FOREMAN & THE BROS. GAIEA  
Fri 8/29 - (FRINGE EVENT) - EDGAR ALLEN AND THE POETTES- THE ABSINTHE DRINKERS  
Sat 8/30 - JAMAALADEEN TACUMAS' DNA GALLERIA

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# THE BUREAU OF PUZZLES & GAMES

Nº 2: NEVER LET THEM KNOW YOUR NEXT MOVE

## ACROSS

3. Old name for Callowhill.
5. 23 Down is a degree in this special club for stoners.
6. Publicly traded firm kranks out Krimpets under a new CEO.
7. Cetacean nemesis has been writing on the walls.
10. If the feds did block parties in front of the office, they'd be on this street.
11. A bland adjective meaning swell or good; a towny neighborhood.
12. This one's a gimme: Crosby.
14. Real estate.
15. City's Program for knocking down old buildings.
17. Pittsburgh kid loved his Hershey bars and silk screens.
19. Short for Dougherty.
21. 25 down and 38 down mail these.
22. Michelle Tanner's dad; autographed photo hangs at China Garden Inn in Willow Grove.
24. Street where the famous "No Hookers Allowed Sign," hangs near 42 down.
26. Andre the Giant's rank among the wonders of the world.
27. The Clash played this theater in 1979.
29. Spring Garden school.
30. 67 down's breakthrough role, also wrote the script.
33. Former regular at the Happy Rooster, Villanova Law School's finest.
38. 67 down's crude stairmaster. Lots of 'champs inside.
39. Runs just to the 22 down of 22 down. If 6 across provided food for corporate functions and weddings, this is the business they'd be in.
40. Chris, David, Rasheed.
41. Four clasped hands defended homes against this.
43. You'll find one of these nine miles away from Market on Ridge Ave., dating back to 1760.
44. Society Hill Towers interrupt this run way of the annual blue-collar drag show.
46. Drives a Bentley with tinted windows down 22 down.

47. Northern Liberties alley, dead ends off Willow.
49. Rock school founder.
51. Runs past Mint's backside.
54. Barely beat 26 across.
55. No longer 3 across.
56. Lived at 234 N. 7th Street but never went to Transit.
57. Tortoise versus Hare.
59. John versus; Stax mainstay.
60. Whipped polio and the Nazis.
62. This garden is not a good first date. Try the branch instead.
65. Street where the dogs ate Peter Pan and the fish line up for Atlantic City.
66. A friend to the whelp and the Fox; 42 down's money maker.
68. Flora deployed by the dozen, especially during courtship.
69. Initials for the Flyers' front line in the early 1980s.
70. Near 71 across and 24 across, old address of this newspaper.
71. Hides behind Front but in front of 70 across.

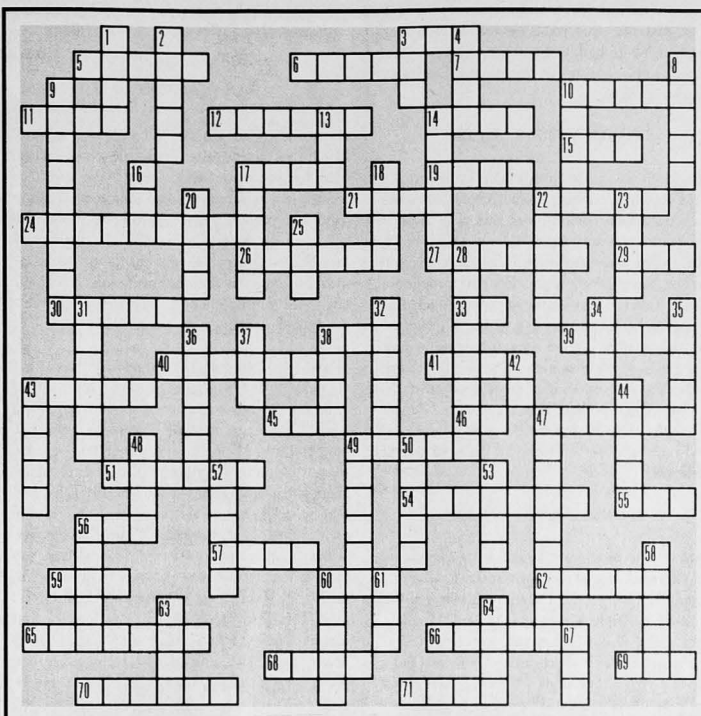
## DOWN

1. 59 across' better half.
2. 700 block smells like kitchen grease; ancient order of flutes.
3. Prominent suburb; sizable and wormy fruit.
4. Brand-name for cheap fluorescent shelving and storage units.
8. This alley disappears under dirt near the North Star.
9. Two-time press secretary.
10. This musician called this city the most evil place in the universe.
13. Lightning stringer; Supermax throwaway.
14. 1800 block offers happy endings near the stock exchange.
16. Races Dragon to 3 Down, and usually loses.
17. Deciduous Fairmount fragrance.
20. Town famed for its auto mechanics and realtors.
20. Indiana icon; you'll know.
22. The focus of a new civility campaign.
23. A weight-bearing solution preferred by ten out of ten bridges, doorways and feet.

## PHILADELPHIA STREET NAME SCRAMBLE\*

A Labyrinthine Tangle Of Utter Perplexion

BY HENRY FLOSS



\*Please note that not all answers are Philadelphia street names. Solve it as you would a crossword.

**PRIZES:** Grand Prize—To the correct entry with the earliest postmark, or, in case there are no correct entries, to the most correct entry, a fifty dollar gift certificate at Greasywaitress Vintage Boutique @ 3rd & Bainbridge and Top Secret Agent status in the Bureau. 2nd Prize—All expenses paid dinner/movie date with any member of THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT's masthead who is reasonably keen on the idea at the Taco House @ 1218 Pine Street and Secret Agent status in the Bureau. 3rd Prize—To all who enter: A special care package of Floss Notes and Special Agent status in the Bureau. Please understand that this puzzle is very difficult. You may not need to get all answers correct in order to win. Correct entries and early entries are more likely to win premium prizes. Please note that 2nd Prize is transferable, subject to approval and conditions, and does not include a goodnight kiss. Send your completed puzzle to TPI BUREAU OF PUZZLES & GAMES / 1026 ARCH STREET / PHILADELPHIA, PA / 19107 with your name, address, and telephone number written on a 3x5-inch index card. And you'd best hope to it, if you want a crack at the GRAND PRIZE.

## for our Beloved Agents of the Bureau... ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S NOODLE EXERCISE

THE WINNERS:

Grand Prize: Michelle Grant of Delhi Street won dinner for two at North Third, courtesy of Mr. Mark Bee, one copy of *Stuck on the Map*, a book of photographs by Dan Murphy, and Top Secret Agent status in the Bureau.

2nd Prize: Martha Cross of Delancey Place won a Freemason subscription to THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT and Top Secret Agent status in the Bureau.

S	H	I	V	B	A	S	S	F	A	I	R	E
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C	N	E	T	A	B	E	D	E	T	A	P	E
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G	R	A	T	E		D	E	Y	S		R	O

## Apology

DEAR READERS & AGENTS OF THE BUREAU:

A puzzle without a solution mirrors the human condition too perfectly to provide any true diversion from it. Instead, it is a cruel and maddening fraud, teasing away the puzzler's precious hours with the promise of answers, when, in fact, there are none to be had. Any publication negligent enough to allow such an answerless puzzle into print is gambling away the only possession it has—the trust and good faith of its readers.

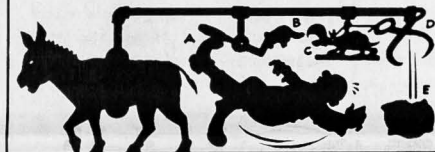
Let history record that I, Henry Floss, Chairman of the Bureau of Puzzles and Games permitted such a thing to occur on my watch. Issue Nine's puzzle contained several misnumbered white squares and misplaced black squares. The correct version of the Issue Nine puzzle appears above. No fault should be assigned to the puzzle's author, Jason E. Gibbs, who sent me a correct version of the puzzle well before deadline. It was I, Henry Floss, who failed in my duty to unlock the platen from the press, and to reassemble the leaden puzzle plates into the correct formation.

All I can offer is my deepest apologies and solemn assurances that such a thing will never occur again. I remain your dutiful servant,

*Henry Floss*

## HENRY FLOSS' MONTHLY INVENTION

(Apologies and respect to Rube Goldberg)



## SAFETY DEVICE FOR WALKING ON ICY PAVEMENTS...

Henry Floss slips on ice, kicking paddle with his foot (A), and lowering finger (B). Snapping turtle (C) extends neck to bite finger, opening ice tongs (D) and dropping pillow (E) thus creating a sweet cushion for Floss' noggin. If this invention proves unsuccessful, mount mule and proceed to the iceless region known as Panama.

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